Volume 1 • Issue 12 • November 1996

PS Extreme

THE PLAYER'S UNOFFICIAL MONTHLY GUIDE TO THE PLA

SPECIAL 1 YEAR ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

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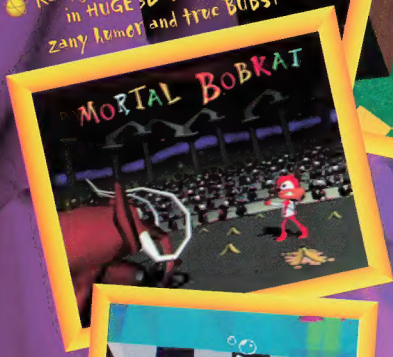

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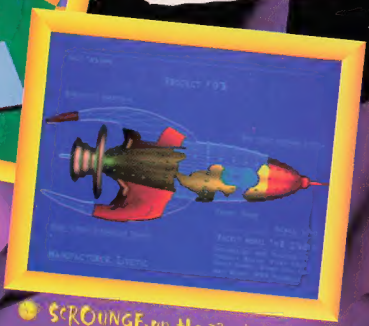

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VOLUME 1 • ISSUE 12
NOVEMBER, 1996

IN THE EXTREME

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EXECUTE: Page 22
Cheats for Tokyo Highway Battle, Beyond the Beyond, Motor Toon GP, Madden 97 and Slamscape, plus a four page special strategy for Tekken 2's Paul Phoenix.

EXPECTING: Page 36
The Crow, NBA Jam Extreme, 2XTreme, Puzzle Fighter, NHL 97, 3D Baseball, Samurai Shodown III, Open Ice and much more is what you're here for.

EXTREME: Page 70
Oh my.

EXRATED: Page 76
This month: NFL Quarterback Club 97, Tecmo Super Bowl, Namco Museum Vol. 2, Black Dawn, Epidemic, Perfect Weapon, Tobal No. 1, Tecmo's Deception, Burning Road, King of Fighters '95 and some other fine softs.

EXPORT: Page 110
Big import action this month for you and us: Hyper Rally and Overblood get the long eye.

SO, DAVE...

EDITORIAL

TELL US WHAT YOU REALLY THINK

This issue marks the completion of our first year of publishing PSExtreme. As our first year draws to a close, I thought it would be interesting to take a quick look back at the PlayStation's first year.

Our first issue featured Sony's ESPN Extreme games on the cover. What is significant and interesting about our debut is that the game was panned by most of the consumer gaming publications, or given, at best, a lukewarm review and that Sony itself wasn't confident in the release of the title. At the risk of blowing our own horn, we knew the game was something special. It took the play theme pioneered by EA's Road Rash series and gave the experience increased depth and excellent play mechanics.

PlayStation owners, worldwide, responded to the title and it remains, to this day, the best-selling, American produced, PlayStation title. (Although, Crash Bandicoot and GameDay 97 are sure to surpass its numbers in the coming months.)

NFL GameDay, a game that couldn't even make it onto the back of the hardware packaging (it had been bumped in favor of Madden 96, which never made it to market), was the story of the PS's first holiday season — taking a little known group of game designers in San Diego, California and vaulting them to the forefront of sports game design. Much like Sega did with the 16-bit Genesis, the PlayStation has been able to completely dominate the sports video game market in its first year — and thus dominate the next generation marketplace with the PlayStation.

Other, original and PlayStation only titles began to insure Sony's place in the market this year. Beginning with Capcom's Resident Evil and ASCII's King's Field, and extending through the middle of the year, to the recent release of Namco's Tekken 2 and Crash, the PlayStation has now become the exclusive home of the most desirable software in the gaming world. And, it's only the beginning ...

Where else can you play quality games like Tobal #1, Final Fantasy VII, Twisted Metal 2, Soul Edge, NCAA GameBreaker, Breath of Fire 3, Resident Evil 2, Disruptor, Burning Road, Jet Moto, King's Field 2, Tecmo's Deception, Pandemonium, Psygnosis' Formula 1, Legacy of Kain, Jumping Flash 2, Ridge Racer Revolution, Project Overkill, In the Zone 2, NHL Face Off 97, NBA Shootout 97, Spawn (working title), Wipeout XL, Destruction Derby 2, Contra: Legacy of War, Time Crisis, Black Dawn and more? NOWHERE but PlayStation.

As '96 winds down and the gaming industry begins gearing up for 1997, you can bet that Sony will be driving this message home to gamers and potential gamers the world over. Year two will be, as hard as it is to believe, even better and more exciting than year one. I have been playing games for a LONG time (too long, some might say) and, believe me when I say it, those of us who own a PlayStation are in the golden age of gaming and platinum is right around the corner.

Lastly, I would like to thank all of you who have loyally supported our magazine during its first year. Your confidence in the PlayStation, and in PSExtreme, does not go unnoticed and we are proud to be part of your gaming life.

Dave

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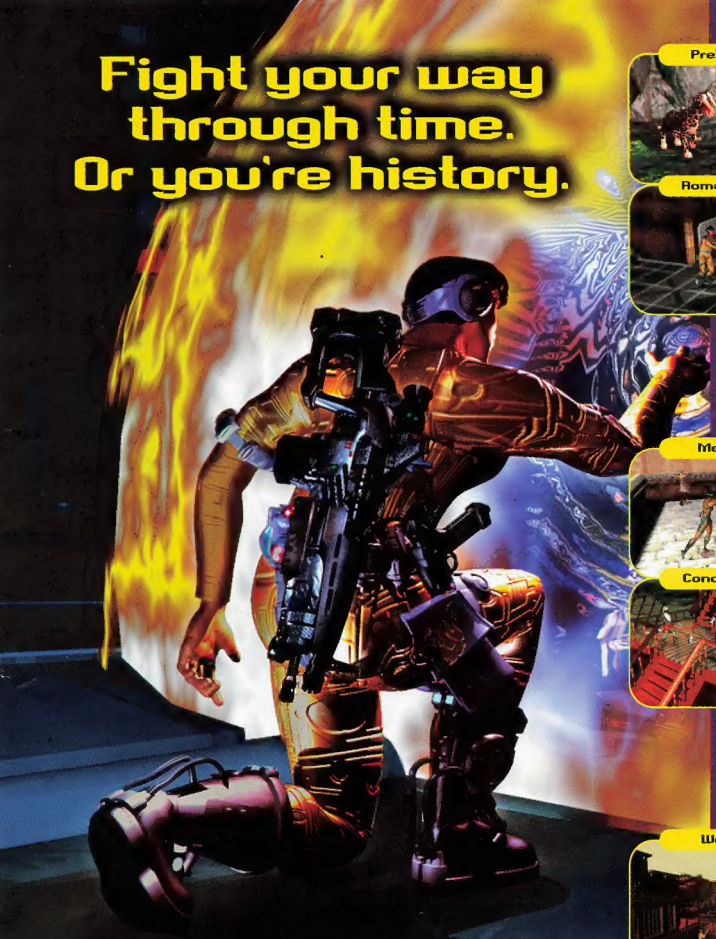

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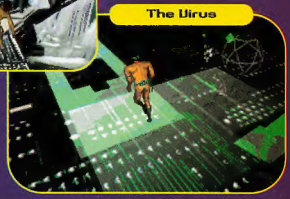

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MY TRIP TO SEATTLE

BY CRASH BANDICOOT™

1. HERE'S ME DRIVING.

4. HERE'S ME SHOWING OFF MY GAME'S REAL-TIME 3-D WORLD WITH ITS LUSH, ORGANIC ENVIRONMENTS, TONS OF OBSTACLES, SECRET PATHWAYS AND BONUS LEVELS. OUTSIDE OF NINTENDO® HEADQUARTERS.

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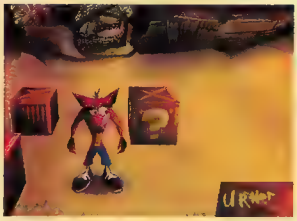
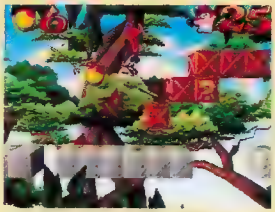
KID TO ADULT K-A CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

2. HERE'S ME AT THE SPACE NEEDLE.

3. HERE'S ME WITH SOME OF THE GALS AT SEATTLE SLIM'S.

MY GAME →





Crash Bandicoot

PlayStation

Sony's long-awaited entry into the platform game arena. You've never experienced anything quite as sensational as this fully animated cartoon world coming to life. It's flooded with obstacles, enormous levels, unbelievable graphics, detailed real-time lighting, amazing music and sound effects. Packed full of solid gameplay, hidden bonus levels, secret pathways and fiendish traps, this is the "must-have" game of the year. Travel in real time across 3D worlds in over 30 levels of intriguing gameplay with thousands of frames of animation! Interact with hilarious, fully rendered 3D cartoon-animated characters. It's packed with all the clas-

MY LOGOS ↓

Dear PSExtreme,

First off, let me take my hat off to you for producing the best PlayStation only magazine. I only have two gripes which compelled me to write to you.
First, why is it that the people who subscribe to your magazine get it later than some of the electronic stores? For a couple of times now, I have seen the upcoming next month's issue of PSExtreme sitting on the racks at the local video game store some 1 to 2 weeks before I get my copy in the mail. I thought that by subscribing we would get the issues sooner. What gives??
Secondly, and this is the main reason why I was prompted to write you, I felt that the reviewer of Choro-Q (Vol. 1, Issue 10) missed the boat big time on this one!!! Being the proud owner of many import titles, I have to stand up for my "little buddy" Choro-Q. After reading the review, it was quite obvious that the reviewer had only played the game for a short time and never got further than the first three tracks (that was obvious from the pictures). Choro-Q is not only one of the best racing games around, in my opinion, it runs circles around Ridge Racer Revolution or Tokyo Highway Battle. The graphics and game play are all there. The control is very tight, and powersliding can be performed with perfection (once you learn how to administer this.) Once you have built up enough money, by finishing within the first three places in any race, you can purchase options for your car to customize it to your liking. New bodies, more responsive steering, dry/mud tires, horns that sound like a horse's neigh, and you can even paint your car any color of the rainbow with or without graphics!! With over a dozen tracks varying in length and locations, Choro-Q is definitely a must have for any racing/driving fan. The only thing bad about this game is that there are tiny seam glitches that pop up every so often, but they are hardly noticeable since you will be completely engulfed by the scenery and gameplay. By all means, if you have the option of playing an import title on your own PlayStation, buy this game. You won't regret it. I hope that Takara/Tamsoft decide to release this game in the U.S. so that your reviewer can eat his words. But if they don't, that's fine too. It will just make my friends that much more jealous of my import games.

Sincerely,
Mark T. Uyeda

P.S. Currently I am using my import copies of Ridge Racer Revolution and Drift King (a.k.a. Tokyo Highway Battle) as coasters for my coffee table. Choro-Q is that good!!!!!

Thanks for writing. You bring up a good point that we've wanted to answer for a while.
We never promised anywhere that subscribers would get their issues before specialty electronics stores. The main advantage to subscribing is the reduced cost. You save a huge percentage over buying it retail. (Note our new low $19.95 subscription price.) Subscriptions go through the U.S. post office, so they get to decide when you get your subscription, not us. Magazines destined for newsstands and specialty stores get delivered to wholesalers by truck direct from our printing plant in Salem, IL. From there they get shipped straight to the stores using their own internal shipping methods. Some stores use very efficient shipping, so they sometimes end up getting their issues before the post office delivers them.
We're going to have to disagree with you on Choro-Q. We all played it for a few hours and the only person who liked it was Ben; he took it home with him overnight and came back raving about some devil car, so I guess you either love it or hate it. If it ever does get picked up for release in the U.S., we'll let someone who loves it review it. Also, the person who takes the screen shots is not always the one who writes the article, so you can't judge how far he played it by the shots.

Dear PSExtreme,

I am fascinated by the possibilities of the memory card slots in my PlayStation. I was wondering if you could help me out. On the back of the memory card package it says it has 8 megs of "Backup Memory". Can having 1 or 2 memory cards in my PlayStation reduce access time and if not could something not yet invented do so? Kind of like an upgrade.

Sincerely,
Dale Knight

P.S. Get it? ha...ha ha... never mind. Your magazine rules...

The memory card holds 8 megabits of backup memory, which is only 1 megabyte. Also, the interface to the memory cards is much too slow to be used as RAM for games.

Dear PSExtreme,

I was thinking about working at your magazine or another and I have some questions for you.
1) Do you get to keep any of the games?
2) Do you get to keep and/or play any "Gold Disk"?
3) Did you go to E3 for free?
4) What are the requirements for your jobs?

Your fan,
James Rousseau

1) We keep a library of games at our offices. If we get duplicate copies of a certain game, then we throw them away. No, we don't, we're not CraZY, yuh know! We play hackey-sack with them in the warehouse and whoever wins, gets to keep the game.
2) Game publishers send us "Gold Disks" (which are individually copied pre-production CD's and can only be played on special PlayStations) whenever they want us to have a game that is not in stores yet. Yes, we play and keep them too!
3) Not free, but darned cheap!
4) Mark has to wash dishes, Greg has to take out the garbage, Tim has to vacuum, Dave has to keep the windows clean and Susan does the magazine pretty much by herself, except when she sub-contracts work out to Jackson.

Dear PSExtreme,

Hello. I would have contacted you on the net, but my parents are behind the times and do not yet have a computer ... Yet.
I am a reader of all game mag's, literally; I have been buying 3 PlayStation mags and 4 other ones monthly. And out of all those I believe that you are the best for me.
I have a few questions/concerns about games and former issues of other mags.
1) First off, in P.S.X.'s Aug./Sept. issue, they talked about Area 51 in the "Now Playing" section. They said "You can use Sega's lightgun to blast through Area 51's levels." How is this possible? Is one gun connection the same as the PlayStation output hookup? Also, will the Konami "Enforcer" game gun work in the game? And I was just wondering when will Area 51 be released? Is it already out? If so where can it be bought? I can't find it anywhere.
2) I am one of the true Mortal Kombat fans and will definitely be buying M.K. Trilogy. (Who won't?) I was just wondering if you knew what the added perk will be in the PlayStation version?
3) I am also Crash Bandicoot's main man, I need this game. I am trying to get my parents to reserve it for me as a birthday present. Could you tell me how Crash will be controlled, will he need an analog controller?

Thank you very much for reading,
Josh Colton
Tilton, NH

1) Sega's gun will definitely not work on the PlayStation for ANY game. As far as why they said it would, we can only guess. Perhaps they reprinted that article's text from one of their many other publications. Only they know for sure. Konami's "Enforcer", according to Konami, will work with Area 51. The game should be available by Christmas.
2) As of this writing, MKT for the PSX has not yet been finalized, so the features may change. The difference in the game, right now, is more characters playable.
3) Crash will use the standard controller. The analog controllers will work with it, but only if they have a digital mode (most do).

Dear PSExtreme,

I wanted to thank you for your dead-on reviews for the PlayStation titles this year.They are usually very in-depth and mention all the aspects of the game, both good and bad. Which is why I was a little surprised at Zach's casual (68% Rating) review of "Summer Games" by EIDOS. He compared it straight across the board to "International Track & Field", not mentioning the big differences (besides the events and graphics) that this game had to offer. Between the comedy relief lines he failed to note the: #1. Second control method (which lets you time the power meter — not thrash your control pad). #2. Real High Jump/Pole Vault competition where you get more than 3 jumps. #3. Real sprinting races where you have qualifying heats and finals. #4. That there is some actual strategy to some of the events.
I know you always stand behind your reviews, and I enjoy seeing comparisons done between two games. Please continue to give us good reviews of the game itself, noting the strengths and weakness to those who may differ from the reviewers particular taste in games.

Thanks and keep up the great work!
Sincerely,
Dale Knight

P.S. A few issues back you previewed a half-developed game due in June by E.A. called "Shredfest". It looked great, where is it now?
P.S.S. How can I get ahold of "Boxers Road", and can you play Japanese Imports on American PlayStations?

Your comments on our Olympic Summer Games review are appreciated. We'll take them to heart.
There is still no exact release date for Shredfest, but it doesn't look good for a release this year.
You can buy Japanese imports through mail order companies. Check the backs of magazines (ours included, of course) for ads that say they sell imports. Playing them on your American system is difficult, if not impossible. There are several methods including a "swap" method involving jury-rigging your system (possibly voiding the warranty) and switching discs during the startup sequence. There is also a chip that you can have put in your system (definitely voiding the warranty). None of these methods are reliable and we strongly advise you not to try them.

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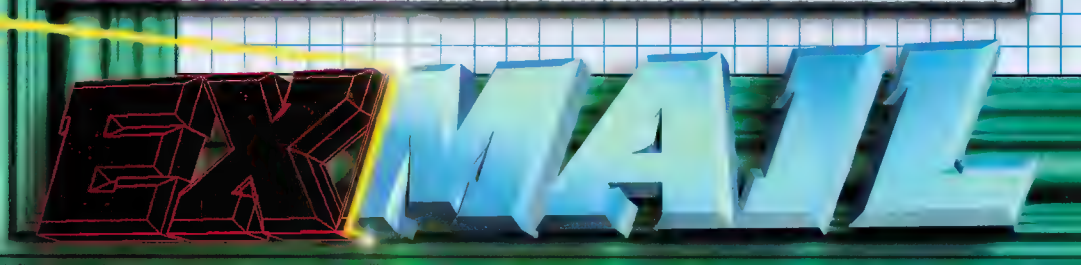

Go for a spin. Or burn up the road.

There are two kinds of people in the world. Those who wear pink. And those who see red. If you're in the second category, you know other racing games just aren't up to speed. So hit the Burning Road.

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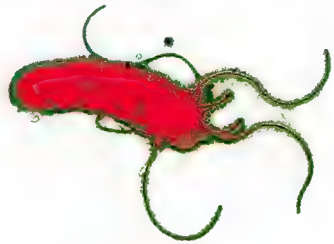
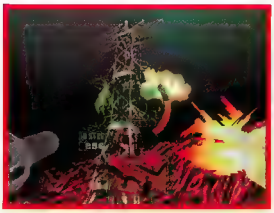
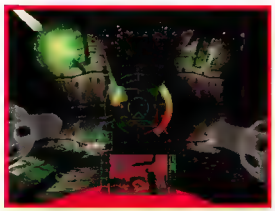


SAVE THE PLANET FROM A DEADLY VIRUS WITH





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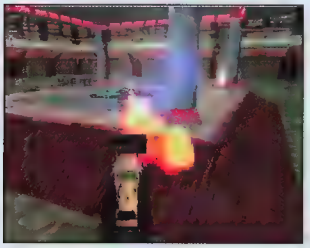
PlayStation Gaming News
From Around The Globe

The theme in this month's edition of EXNews is "last minute previews." So, without further ado, let's take a look at the products that snuck under the door, just as we were going to press.

MORE TWISTED STUFF

Sony's "Twisted Metal 2: World Tour" is inching closer to release, and Single Trac, the developers of the original game, as well as this sequel, have packed in a number of new courses and vehicles, as well as some new, advanced play mechanics. In addition to the Special Attack weapons, featured in the first game, TM2 will offer the player both Advanced Attack and Combo Attack modes. Advanced attacks are the product of different D-pad



movements, in combination with the selected Special Attack and can only be attempted when the Advance Attack Energy bar is fully charged. Combo Attacks are created by combining different Advanced Attacks.

TM2 features both single player Tournament and Challenge match modes and a split-screen two player mode, with multiple difficulty levels, 12 different characters/ vehicles and eight different battlegrounds, including New York City, Paris, Denmark, Hong Kong and more — with appropriate landmarks featured in each. The original Twisted Metal was a critical and sales success and more is expected from the sequel ... stay tuned next month.

SONY VS. 2-D: ROUND TWO

We told you a few months back about the great pains Ocean went through to get the hugely playable (and two-dimensional) action/strategy game Worms, released in the States; now we hear that Sony has rejected Capcom's initial submission of Mega Man 8, the first 32-bit entry in the, errr, mega-popular side-scrolling action game. The game will no doubt be approved after a bit of haggling — this is Capcom, after all, one of Sony's most valuable third-party licensees--but the fact that Capcom needs to haggle about such a great game at ALL is some cause for concern. C'mon, Sony, just because it's 3-D doesn't mean it's a great game (CyberSled, Criticom, et cetera), and just because it's 2-D doesn't mean it's a bad game (Bust-A-Move 2, Worms, et cetera). We'll try to learn more about Sony's reasons for 2-D disdain and report the results in a future installment of EXNEWS (because we like in-depth reporting as much as anybody).

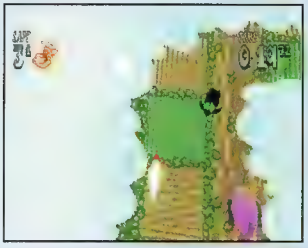
In other Capcom reportage, Resident Evil 2 (insert your drool cups) is well under way and, while we haven't received a playable version yet, we've been given screen shots that have us rather hot and bothered. And, we're just cruel enough to share them with you. Other Capcom titles on the way: the awesome Star Gladiator, Capcom's spectacular 3-D fighting-game debut (look for the official strategy guide from you-know-who), and Super Puzzle Fighter, a Tetris-y game with super-deformed characters from Street

Fighter and Darkstalkers. (Check out the preview in this very issue.)

OH, THOSE WACKY RACERS!

Mindscape, one of a group of software publishers that probably wish 1996 would just go away, may have finally found a reason to celebrate this holiday season — in the form of one "Dare Devil Derby". This game, originally titled "Supersonic Racers", is the 32-bit version of the classic Micro-Machines style that was so successful in the 8-bit world. DDD will offer eight player simultaneous racing (a first on the PlayStation) through over 30 unique environments that include the wild west, deep space and a haunted house.

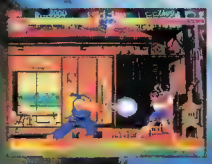
Gamers can choose from eight different characters and use every special



EXNEWS

SUDDENLY, THINGS ARE GETTING PERSONAL.

[illegible] it's your reputation on the line. And time to leave your mark in this [illegible] of the #1 arcade phenomenon. On your side is the innovative custom combo system, now allowing you to link together your own series of brutal attacks. You'll need every possible advantage to take on a total of 18 fighters, the most ever in Street Fighter legend. Remember, hesitation is deadly. Because in the end, it's all about who's the last one left standing.



STREET FIGHTER ALPHA 2

CAPCOM

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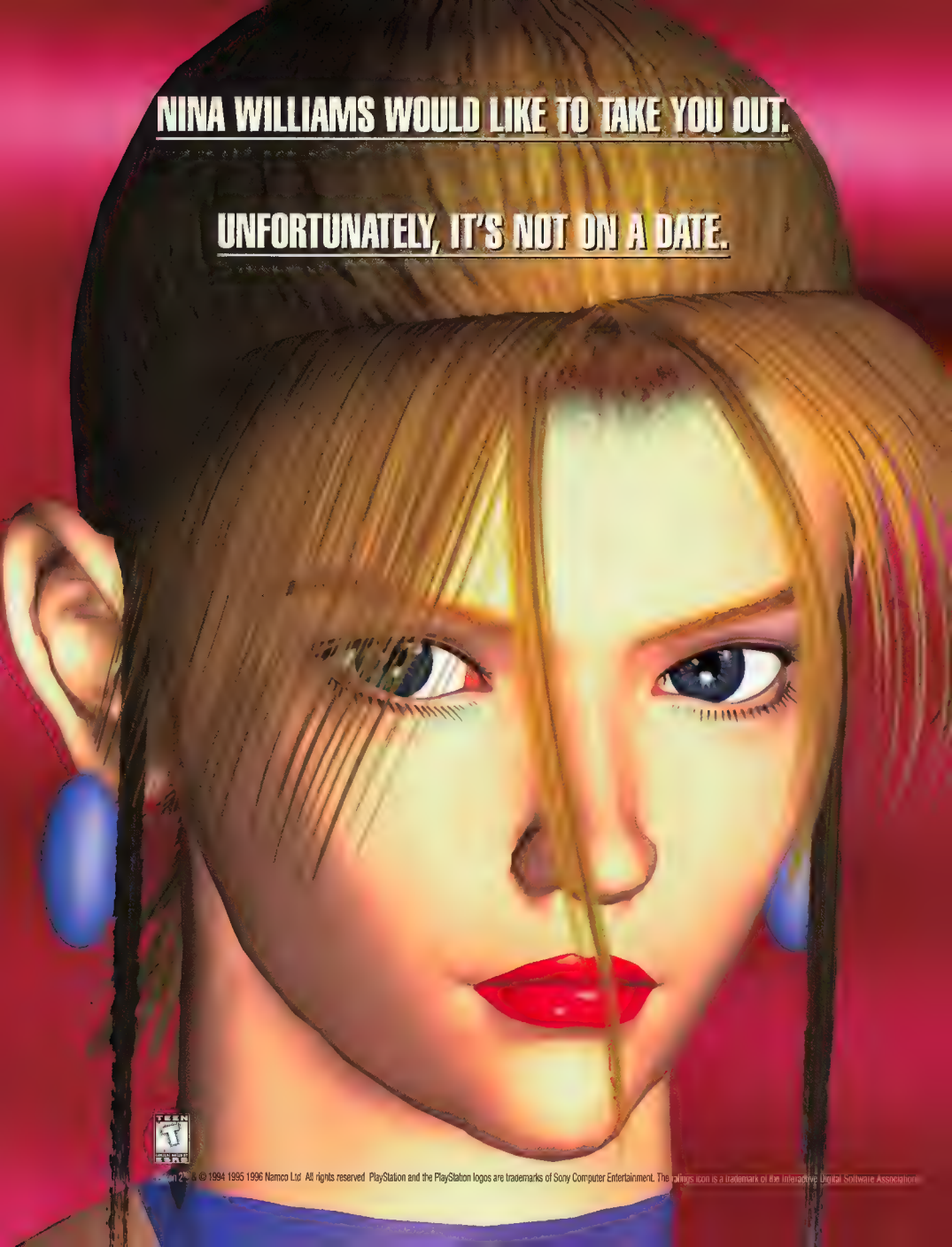

Tekken 2™ & © 1994 1995 1996 Namco Ltd. All rights reserved. PlayStation and the PlayStation logos are trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment. The ratings icon is a trademark of the Interactive Digital Software Association.

Meet Nina. Blonde, beautiful - the girl next door. That is, if you live next door to a 22-year old paid assassin. This Irish Akido expert will take out anyone - from a helpless lackey to a head-of-state. It's a matter of money. It's a matter of

the world's greatest fighters vying for the title in Tekken 2™. With three new fighting modes. 23 new stages. Brand new 3D animations, and more moves and combos than any game on Earth. Nina Williams wants to prove to the world she can break hearts and bones. Guess blondes really do have more fun.

鉄拳 TEKKEN 2™

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PlayStation

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PlayStation Gaming News
From Around The Globe

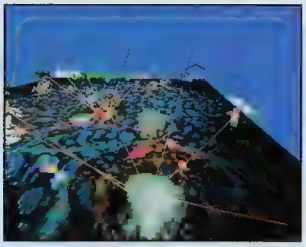
move, dirty trick and strategic ploy in their arsenal to try and achieve victory.

The game is presented in a top-down, real-time 3D view and the gameplay, particularly in the multi-player game, is pure competitive fun. From the little time we did have with the product before going to press, it looks like Dare Devil Derby might give Motor Toon 2 a run for its money. Look for our review in EXRATED next month.

ROBOTRON X NEARS COMPLETION

Way, way back in the May 1996 issue, we interviewed Player 1, the up-and-coming band of roving developers who travel the land, programming whatever computers they encounter along the way, spreading good cheer and passing out fish tacos to the homeless. Nooo, not really, they've got a real nice office in Santa Monica

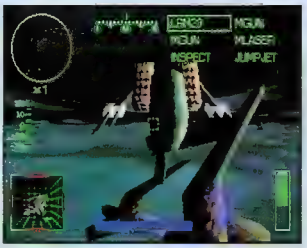
We showed you some very early screen shots of their first effort, the 3D sequel to Williams' classic Robotron: 2084. Well, the game is now almost finished and we got this really big urge to show you more, but we didn't have space in EXPECTING, so we stuffed it in here. So anyway, check out the shot and check in next issue for some big editorial action on this fine soft.



ACTIVISION'S NEW 32-BIT LINEUP

Among some of the other newsier events recently was Activision's press-junket down in hazy L.A. On display was a strong showing of 32-bit titles marking Activision's return into the home console market. Although, we've already previewed and reviewed (see this month's review of Time Commando in EXRATED) most of what they had on display; Blast Chamber, newly acquired Crystal Dynamic's Legacy of Kain and Power Move Pro Wrestling, there were a couple of surprises, such as their immensely successful PC hit, MechWarrior 2, an all-new 3D

action/shooter, Apocalypse and a very promising, but early, version of Pitfall 3D. All of these titles, even in their



preliminary stages are lookin' pretty awesome. We'll keep you posted as these games come closer to completion.

KONAMI IS "ZONING" AGAIN

Konami is returning to the hard court with a sequel to their hit PlayStation hoops game, NBA In the Zone. The new game (you'll never guess what's coming next), entitled "NBA In the Zone 2", addresses some of the features that were lacking in the first game and will attempt to expand on the strengths of the original product. For those of you that didn't play the original, In the Zone was an NBA licensed dunk-fest, loosely based on Konami's "Run & Gun" arcade game. Although the first game was light on strategy, Konami assures us that this will not be the case in the sequel. As an example of this: In the Zone allowed for five players per team — no substitutions, no season play statistical database and the wrong players in the wrong places. In the Zone 2 will offer full rosters and a deep database, to go along with the already impressive polygonal graphics. We hope to have a playable version of the game soon and you can expect to see In the Zone 2 in stores before Christmas.

EX NEWS

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NASCAR® RACING

For the PlayStation™ Game Console

NASCAR® Racing for the PC was the biggest racing game ever. Now it's available for the PlayStation™ Game Console.

Change tires, gears, suspension, and more to customize your car's performance in Sim mode.

- Totally realistic car physics
- Customizable Simulation Mode or hop-in and-start-driving Arcade Mode
- 1996 cars and drivers on 18 different tracks, including 2 fantasy tracks
- Night racing on 3 tracks
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- Officially licensed by NASCAR®
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In car view puts you in the driver's seat. Rear view lets you see the big picture.

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SEND US YOUR CODES AND WIN BIG PRIZES!

Each month we'll pick the best code sent in by our loyal and intelligent readers and send that person a brand spankin' new copy of ASCII's hot new RPG for the PlayStation, King's Field II (that's right, II, the sequel is ready!) or, if fighting's your thing, ASCII's SpecializedStick (you decide.) But wait! That's not all! If you act now, we'll also include ASCII's super stylish SpecializedPad for the PlayStation, for your controlling pleasure, PLUS twelve (12) free issues of the best, the only, monthly dedicated PlayStation magazine, PSExtreme, of course! Whoa! That's a lot of cool stuff for just a code; what are you waiting for?

WE HAVE A WINNER!

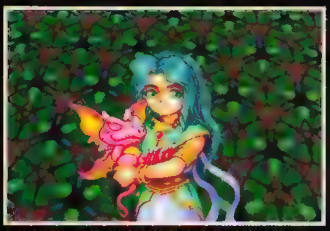
Congratulations and thanks go to this month's winners, Martin and Christine Gilbert of Chicago, IL. They got us this awesome Tokyo Highway Battle code before anyone else! Thanks kids! Tim says your goodies are on the way!

Tokyo Highway Battle

9,999,999 UPGRADE POINTS: As soon as the title screen appears, hold down L1, L2, R1, ↓ and START. Keep holding these until the Venue screen appears. Now, go to the speed shop and you'll see that you have 9,999,999 upgrade points!

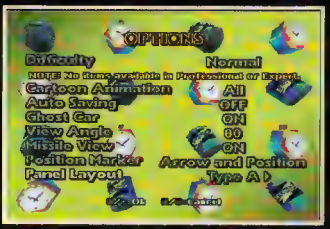
CONTEST RULES: Anyone of any age can enter. The only people not eligible to win are employees of Dimension Publishing or ASCII Entertainment, their friends, family, pets and anyone they talk to or know of. Dimension Publishing reserves the right to make any and all decisions regarding the contest. One winner per month will be chosen, at Dimension Publishing's discretion, based on the code or trick supplied by the entrant. If you win but do not specify, in your code submission, which prize you want to receive (King's Field or an ASCII Specialized Stick), then we will choose for you.

Beyond the Beyond



INFINITE MONEY/INFINITE MAGICAL RINGS: You must first have the magical rings (Ring of Fire, Healing Ring, etc.) EQUIPPED. Then go to any shop and sell the equipped ring for 7,500 gps. After you sell it, you are still equipped with the ring. Keep on selling until you reach the maximum. You can also gain as many magical rings as you like, simply by buying the rings back from the shop. Since you have as much money as you like, you can buy as many rings as you like.

Motor Toon GP



ACCESSING EXTRA CHARACTERS [4e43]
Highlight the 1st "????"
Hold: L1 and press Select
Hold: L2, L1, R2 and press Select
Hold: L1 and press Select
Hold: R1, R2 and press Select

ACCESSING ADDITIONAL TRACKS [4154]
Highlight the 2nd "????"
Hold: L1 and press Select
Hold: R1 and press Select
Hold: L1, R1 and press Select
Hold: L1 and press Select

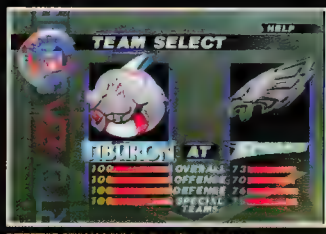
ACCESSING TANK COMBAT [5443]
Highlight the 3rd "????"
Hold: L1, R1 and press Select
Hold: L1 and press Select
Hold: L1 and press Select
Hold: R1, R2 and press Select

ACCESSING SUBMARINE X [5558]
Highlight the 4th "????"
Hold: L1, R1 and press Select
Hold: R1, R2 and press Select
Hold: L1, R1 and press Select
Hold: L2 and press Select

ACCESSING MOTOR TOON R [4631]
Highlight the 5th "????"
Hold: L1 and press Select
Hold: L1, R2 and press Select
Hold: R1, R2 and press Select
Hold: R1 and press Select

HIDDEN OPTIONS: While holding L1, L2, R1, R2, go to the options menu. You will now be able to configure your own settings!

Madden 97



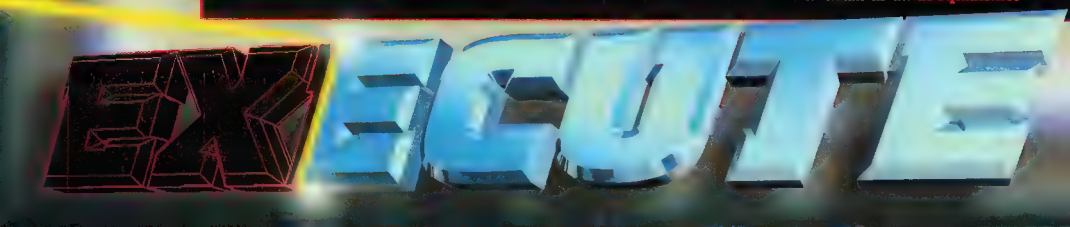
SEVEN HIDDEN TEAMS: In Exhibition Mode, at the User Records, enter "TIBURON". Press × to accept this name, then press ○ to back out. At the team select screen, there should be seven new teams.

VIEW ALL THE CINEMAS: When you power on your PlayStation with Madden tucked safely inside, hold down R1 through the opening screens until the "Cinematics" screen appears.

SlamScape

PASSWORDS: Here be some 'words for this confusing and ultimately kinda wacky shoot-'em-up.
Uraniumania: △, ×, ×, □, ○, △, ×, △
Uraniumania (Bonus): ×, ×, ×, △, ○, ×, □, △
Repsychler: ×, ○, ○, △, □, □, ○, ×
Repsychler (Bonus): □, ○, □, □, △, ○, △, △
Endless Bummer: ×, △, ×, ○, △, □, ○, ×
Endless Bummer (Bonus): □, ○, □, ×, △, △, □, ×
Viva Los Vagrantes: ○, △, ×, △, ×, □, □, △

Send all code submissions to:
EXECUTE
Dimension Publishing
1175 Chess Drive, Suite E
Foster City, CA 94404
or email us at: **d3@quake.net**



Twenty-six have been given life, and twenty-six will take it away.
26 characters. 29 play levels. Playable bosses from the past.
It's not Mortal Kombat, it's all previous arcade MK's crammed into one.
MORTAL KOMBAT®
TRILOGY
PlayStation
NINTENDO64
MATURE
MIDWAY

鉄拳 TEKKEN 2

PAUL PHOENIX

STRATEGY SPECIAL

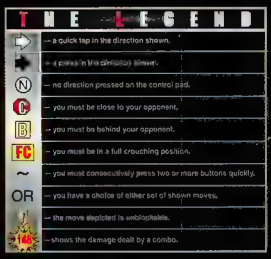
These boxes show you everything you need to know to be able to decipher our little strategy section. Remember that all moves are shown as if your character is facing right. For performing them facing the opposite direction, simply reverse the directions pressed.

The buttons shown throughout are exactly as they appear on your PlayStation controller(s). Each button corresponds realistically to character movement (i.e., if you press Left Punch, your character will punch with his/her left hand.)

The way we describe how damage is dealt may be a bit confusing. In Arcade mode, the energy meter is comprised of 110 points. In Vs mode, the default setting is 140 points. When you use a move in Tekken2, and it connects with your opponent, it will take off the specified amount of damage we have shown in the Move Boxes.

The Legend shows you all of the symbols used and explains their usage. Make sure you look for these symbols, as moves will not work if you don't take them into consideration.

In the first Tekken, Paul was a frequently chosen character — because of his lightning fast speed and good repertoire of moves. In Tekken 2, Paul is even better than before. Paul is one of the select few characters who was given a counter move. He has also gained a multi-part throw, which is sure to finish any opponent off quickly. Paul also has an excellent new 10-string, which is confusing to block against. Also great about Paul, is his low-hit/high damage juggle-combos. With just a few hits, Paul can take down an opponent's health to virtually nothing. Used correctly by a skilled Tekken 2 player, Paul is virtually undefeatable.



THROWS

*Pause for one second after N.

You blasted your way through an onslaught of undead marines and
hell-spawned hordes in Doom, Ultimate Doom and
Doom II. Now you can
retire, right? Wrong.
Seems flesh-eating mutants have the mortality rate
of a cockroach and are
alive and kicking in
Doom – the last of the
legendary Doom prequels.
It's two new 10-level
episodes complete with
new
& The
new frighteningly realistic
graphics and
pounding music. It's time
to finish what you started.
OLD SOLDIERS NEVER DIE,
THEY JUST TURN INTO
BLOODTHIRSTY
MUTANT ZOMBIES
FINAL
DOOM
End of story
MIDWAY
id
Software
PlayStation
Now available on Sony PlayStation

NECK THROW

OR | THROW | 40

ULTIMATE ESCAPE

COUNTER | 5,8,8,35

SPECIAL ARTS

ONE-TWO PUNCHES

H, H | 10, 15

JAB-ROUNDHOUSE

H, H | 12, 30

JAB-SWEEP

H, L | 12, 17

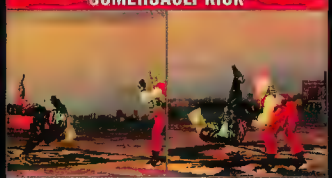
REVERSE PDK

H, L | 10, 15

DOUBLE JUMP KICK

M, M | 25, 25

SOMERSAULT KICK



M | 20

JUMPING TRIPLE KICK

(OR OR) | M,M(HorM or L) | 20,15,(25 or 15 or 15)

PHOENIX SMASHER

M | 35

HAMMER PUNCH

M | 15

HAMMER PUNCH-DEATH FIST

M, M | 15, 30

HAMMER PUNCH-SWEEP-DEATH FIST

M, L, M | 15, 15, 25

SAY NO TO DRUGS.
SAY YES TO BLOODSHED AND HELICOPTER WARFARE.

HERE'S YOUR CHANCE TO GREASE THE LOW-LIFE SCUMBAGS OF THE TERRORIST UNDERWORLD.

STRAPPED INTO YOUR CHOPPER, YOU'LL BE FLYING 32 HIGH-RISK COMBAT MISSIONS OVER 7 ENEMY-INFESTED TERRAINS. SEARCHING FOR AND RESCUING INNOCENT HOSTAGES. WREAKING HAVOC ON THEIR CAPTORS.

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BLACK DAWN. ARCADE COMBAT SO EXTREME, YOU'LL NEVER GO BACK TO ORDINARY CARNAGE.

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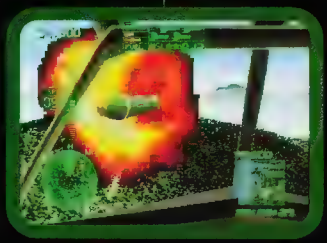

BLACK DAWN

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In 2096 Having a Bomb
Strapped to You is a Sport.
C4
C4
01:35

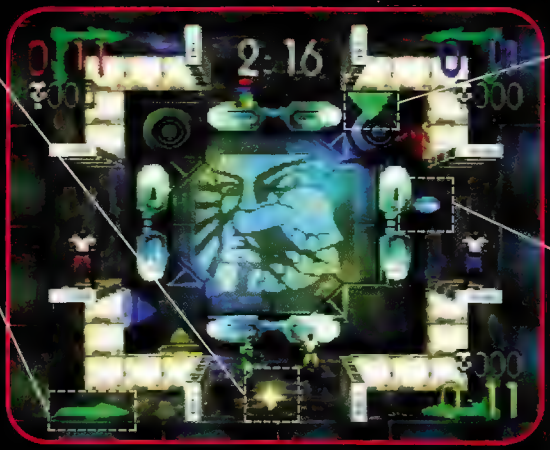
(Want to Play?)

The Crystal

Drop it in your reactor to increase your time.

The Kickers

Kicking these rotates the chamber 90 degrees.

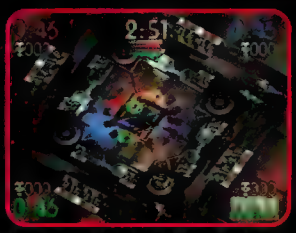


The Reactors

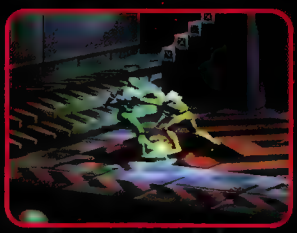
Drop the crystal in an opponent's reactor to drain his Kill-Clock.

The Power-Ups

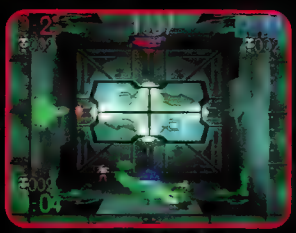
Hi-Jumps, Crystal Bombs, Mercuries, Mag Boots & more.



Your arena is a rotating chamber... Turn it left. Turn it right. Turn the wall into a floor.



Your goal is survival... In this multiplayer deathmatch, it's every man for himself.



Your opponent is time... Because when your clock hits zero, you're cooked.

BLAST CHAMBER™

The 3-D Rotatable Deathmatch

1 - 4 Players

SEGA SATURN

PlayStation

PC CD-ROM

ACTIVISION

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LOW LEG

↓ • L 15

LOW LEG COMBO

↓ • • L, M 15, 25

FLASH ELBOW

→ ↓ ↘ M 15

STONE ELBOW

FC ↘ ↓ ↙ M 30

STONE ELBOW-POWER PUNCH

FC ↘ ↓ ↙ ← M, M 30, 30

STONE BREAKER

FC ↘ ↓ ↙ ← M, L 30, 25

DUCKING LUNGE

← ↓ ↘ N/A N/A

COUNTER

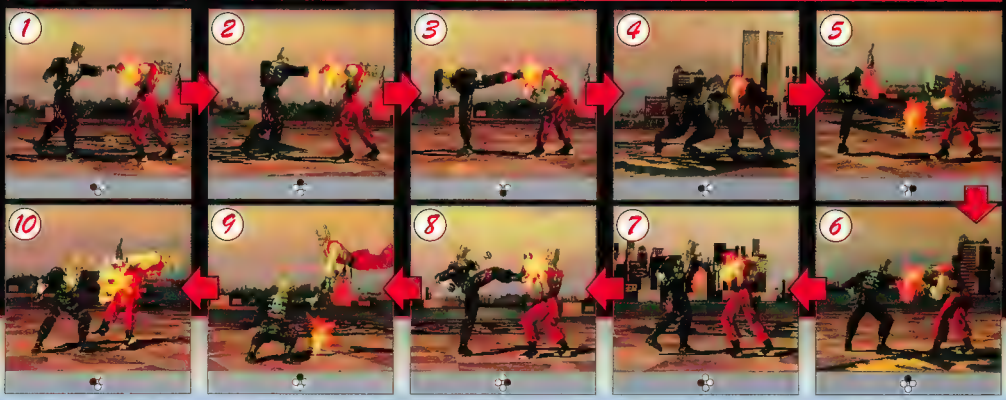
← OR ↓ COUNTER VARIES

BURNING FIST

← ↓ ↘ N/A 100

COMBOS

10-STRING #1



opponent, the rest of the 10-String is unblockable. Use this particular 10-String sparingly if you want to surprise your opponent when they least expect it.

SLICING THROUGH THE THIRD DIMENSION...

...NOVEMBER 1996

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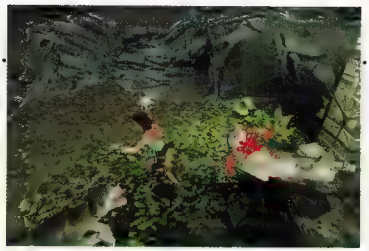
If the game graphics don't blow you away one of these will

Go where no man has ever come but alive. Notice we said "man."



Treasure seeking, puzzle solving, alligator wrestling, and still time for a fight

SOMETIMES, HAVING A

Sometimes, you also need guts. Or a brain. Or quick feet. Other times, you need all of the above plus grenades, a shotgun and a matching pair of nine millimeters. Such is your fate when you control Lara Croft, heroine heartthrob of Tomb Raider.

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NOTHING LIKE A LITTLE SWIM BEFORE FENDING OFF A PACK OF WOLVES

KILLER BODY

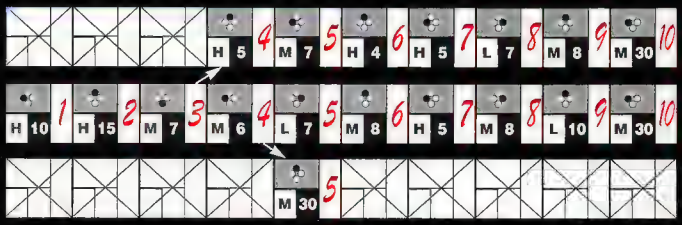
JUST ISN'T ENOUGH.

NOT EVERYONE SEES A BRIGHT LIGHT JUST BEFORE DYING (LUCKY STIFFS)

Lara has her sights on a few ancient artifacts, and she's not going to let anything or anybody get in her way. Alligators. Wolves. Thugs. They're all tempting fate once in Lara's path. But hey, what's a little temptation? Especially when everything looks this good. In the game, we mean. Check out Tomb Raider at www.DOMARK.com.

EIDOS INTERACTIVE

TOMB RAIDER™



With Paul established as our top-ranked character in the game, it would seem that he would have an exceptional number of 10-String combos or super high damaging ones, at least. This is not the case. In fact, the only place that Paul is lacking is in the 10-String area. He basically only has two 10-Strings and one 5 string that can all be blocked, with a bit of practice. The good thing is that they are very fast and can surprise opponents, if you use them randomly and only when you need them. Try not to simply use the 10-Strings to attack. When you have your opponent down to a tiny bit of energy left, explode out with a 10-String to finish him off!

With this combo starting off with a Hop Kick, it is imperative you learn at least THIS one. Paul can counter almost any attack, with his simple Hop Kick, and that always leads to big damage opportunities for you. The best times to use this style combo would be after a missed slow recovery move, or as your opponent is lunging toward you. If you use this move as your opponent is attacking, it will score for even more damage -- as the first hit will count for an actual counter strike. Study each character — that way you will learn, at the very least, the most-used slow recovery moves for every character.

The second of Paul's Hop Kick combos; this one is a bit trickier to execute. After you get the Hop Kick off, you have to make sure you are in a full crouch, before you press the LP, or you will bust-out with a Hammer Punch. Although this combo takes a bit more practice, it definitely is a crowd pleaser. With explosive force, it can sometimes make an opponent think twice before failing to block again. Either of the two different finishers are great, and both do about the same amount of damage. Since these combos also start with the Hop Kick, you will want to learn them and make them a permanent part of your arsenal.

One of Paul's most powerful combos; the Stone Breaker to Low Leg Sweep-Elbow is very useful for ridding your opponent of his health. With only four hits, this combo delivers more than 80 points of damage. Another great feature, of this combo, is that it starts off with an already confusing move ... the Stone Breaker. The best time to utilize this combo is when your opponent is attacking high. This way, you will sneak underneath his attack and take him to the floor. Set yourself up to pop this combo out by crouching first, and throwing some punches or low kicks ... out. Then, just go in to the combo.

Just a fun little combo; this one doesn't do all that much damage and really doesn't have that much range. It is only useful when you are very close to your opponent, and are mixing up some front kicks in with your uppercuts. This way, your opponent will walk into the uppercut,

turn right off!

Proof That Demons Do Exist

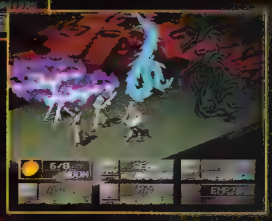
In the near future, mankind has conquered dimensional travel but the door we have opened swings both ways. The peaceful city you have grown up in has become a haven for dark creatures from another world— Demons! Now it's up to you and your friends to harness the hidden power within you by entering the fantasy game known as Persona.

You awaken with incredible abilities that you will need to defeat the scores of Demon invaders and cleanse the land of their forces. Converse with them before doing battle to determine your best course of action. Fight them or enlist their aid in your mission. Either way, you are set for the fantasy adventure of a lifetime!

Special Features

- Based on the ultra-popular, mega-hit, Megami Tensei series. first time to hit US shores
- 100+ hours of pulse pounding gameplay
- Over 300 different monsters to do battle with
- Morph any member of your party into a more powerful source known as "Persona"
- Fight your way to one of many endings

Persona



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Persona™ is the first chapter of the

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RPG

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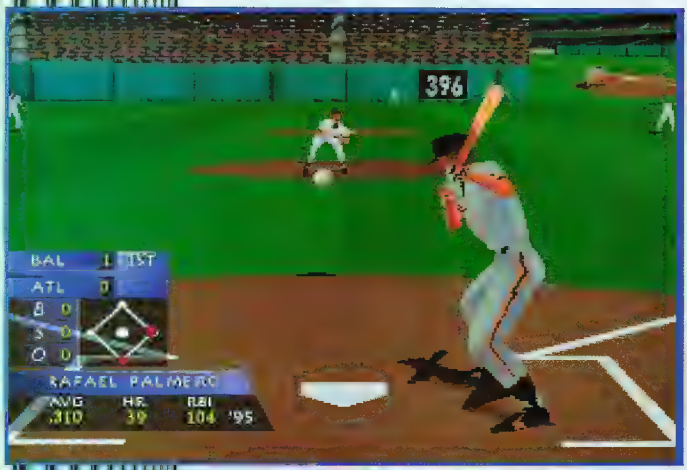
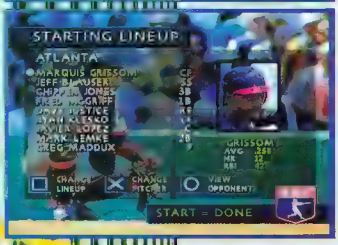
Call 1-800-771-3772 for Game Rating Information.

3D BASEBALL

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS • AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

Crystal Dynamics has three PlayStation titles shipping before the end of the year; Pandemonium and Legacy of Kain, which we have covered over the past few issues of PSExtreme, and their new baseball game that is the focus of this feature, "3D Baseball". 3D Baseball has been in development for quite some time and it looks like CD's hard work is starting to pay off. The polygon players are extremely smooth and animated in great detail. The game offers a ton of different camera angles (although some are really only meant for use during instant replay), a Major League Baseball Player's Association license and multiple ballparks. We would classify 3D Baseball in the same category as Crystal's "Slam & Jam '96" (91%/Gold/May '96), with arcade-style action being its primary concern — with a taste of simulation added to finish the product off. Even though baseball season is winding down, CD hopes to have baseball fans feeling like it's spring again. We should have a reviewable copy of 3D Baseball for our December issue and the game should ship before Thanksgiving.





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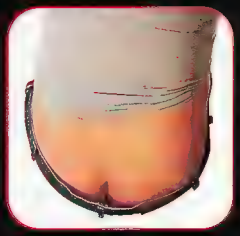
IT SEEMS EVERY AD TRIES TO SELL YOU A GAME WITH MORE



GUTS,

MORE BUTTS,

MORE SMUT,

AND MORE NUTS.

HOW ABOUT MORE FUN?

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Lose the hype. Enjoy games that are hip. Namco Museum Volume 2™ is the second release from our classic arcade anthology. Six more arcade hits blast out of the past to give you flashbacks of fun. Super Pac-Man, Xevious, Dragon Buster, Gaplus, Grobda and Mappy are all included on one groovy CD - each game an exact translation from the original arcade coin-op. Hey, who said you can't have fun at the Museum?

KIDS TO ADULTS
K-A
CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

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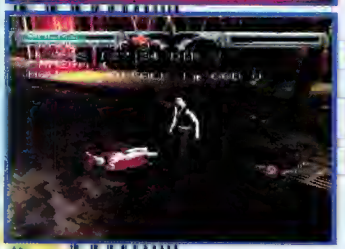

THE CROW

ACCLAIM • AVAILABLE JANUARY

Coinciding with the release of the movie, The Crow, Acclaim is readying for a fourth quarter release, The Crow: City of Angels for the PlayStation. This 3D action/fighting game chronicles the adventures of Ashe, the comic book vigilante. As the benefactor of inherited supernatural powers of the crow, Ashe is on a gothic mission for vengeance. (Against who, we're not exactly sure.) The game uses 3D polygon technology that allows you to fight more than one opponent simultaneously, with over 50 different motion captured fighting moves. You'll have 26 characters to do battle with in five different scenarios, each containing hundreds of rooms. Each room contains a variety of weapons to do battle with, including the, ever popular, molotov cocktail. As you can see, there's enough to keep even the most sinical gamer busy for a while. Look for a full review in the coming months.

EXPECTING

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HARDCORE 4X4™

YOU'LL NEED TOUGH STUDS AND BIG BOLTS...

Get **bent** over six radical terrains.

Get **wrenching** multiple views with hard-rocking adrenalin-pumping music.

White **knuckle** driving and extreme weather conditions.

Rampage your rig with **actual** four wheel independent suspension and **real** vehicle motion.

Maxx out your truck, **crunch** the fenders, and **kiss** your competition, but don't **drive** it into the ground.

...'CAUSE THIS AIN'T NO SUNDAY DRIVE

head games

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AGE TO ADULTS

SEGA SATURN

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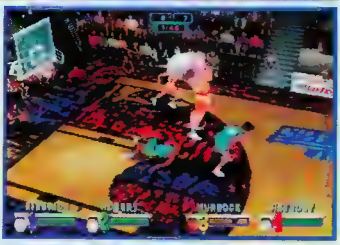
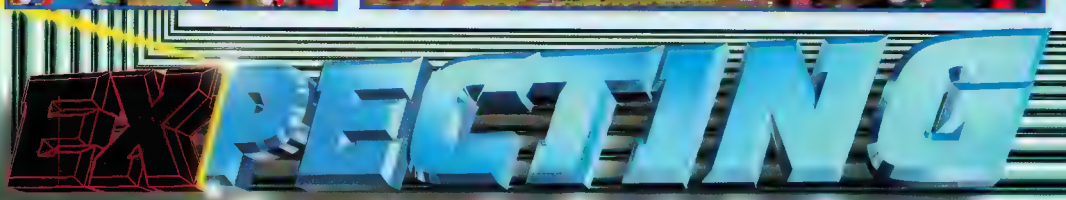
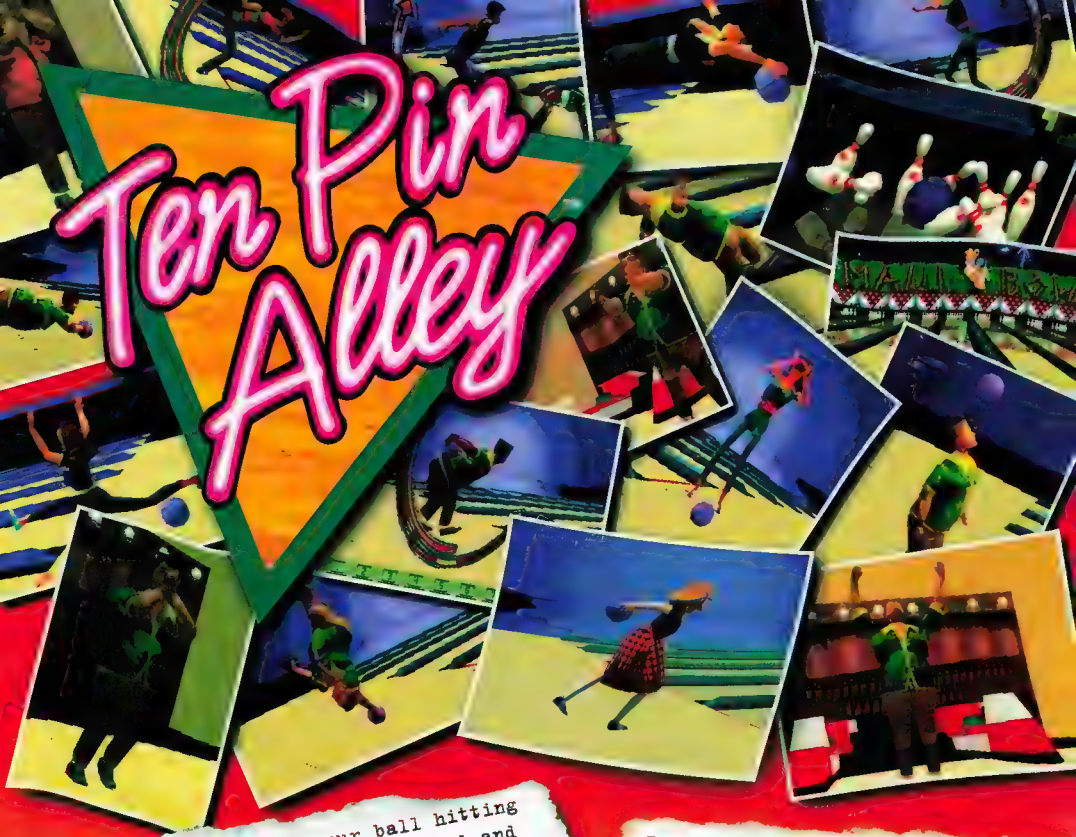


NBA JAM EXTREME

ACCLAIM • AVAILABLE DECEMBER

By now, we've all played or heard of the NBA Jam series from Acclaim. When College Slam shipped last Spring, we pretty much thought that Acclaim had exhausted their variations of the game. Well, we were wrong. NBA Jam Extreme (No relation!) is due out for the PlayStation this holiday season. Sporting an all new 3D engine, Extreme looks like the best of the bunch. The game will feature play-by-play announcing through the venerable Marv Albert, plus all of the NBA teams and player skills based on their actual NBA stats. Of course, you've got the standard monster dunks, flaming sneakers and turbo action that has made the Jam series a perennial crowd pleaser. What makes Extreme a little different, however, is that it was designed from the get go to be a PlayStation title, and your selection of players also includes some very unique celebrities, including, but not limited to Newt Gingrich. Can you imagine Newt running over Algore on his way to a triple back flip monster dunk? We can't wait for this one!





The precise physics of your ball hitting the pins is so technically advanced and graphically dazzling, you'll be bowled over!

Lots of colorful characters, male and female, righty and lefty, each with their own unique styles.

Choose lane and alley designs– retro **Maui Bowl** or contemporary **Ten Pin Alley** with crazy **Conga Bowl**.

NO BOWLING SHOES REQUIRED

Sanctioned by Bowling Hall of Fame and Museum St. Louis, Mo.

KIDS TO ADULTS ESRB

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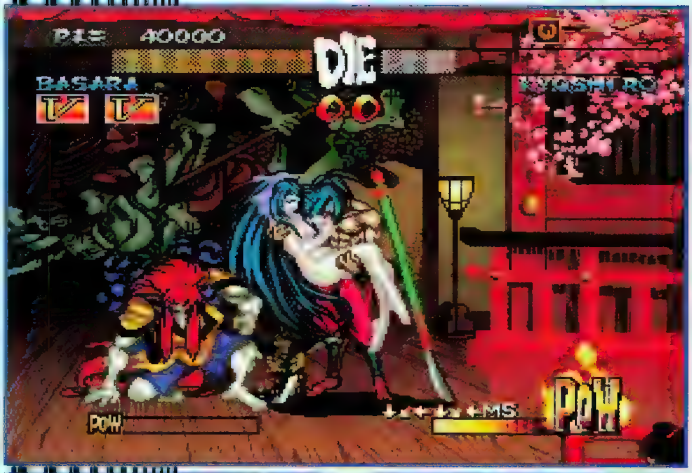
SAMURAI SHODOWN III

SONY/SNK • AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

Samurai Shodown III: Blades of Blood is the second joint release from SNK and Sony (see the first, King of Fighters '95, reviewed in this month's EXRATED section) and is set for a stateside release by the end of October/early November. If you've visited your local arcade, or are a fan of the NEO GEO system, then you've probably played one of the three Samurai Shodown games before. Out of the endless avalanche of one-on-one fighters that seem to deluge the NEO GEO, the Samurai series has been one of the most successful, garnering a cult following, with ports of the various Shodowns going from the Super NES to GameBoy to even the 3DO. SSIII, features a huge cast of characters that have appeared in the previous versions and some new ones as well. There are plenty of new moves, including counters and supers, and each character has two different fighting techniques. We will go a lot more in-depth when we follow-up with a review in next month's issue.



EXPECTING

THE ULTIMATE BATTLE IS THE ONE YOU FIGHT ALONE...

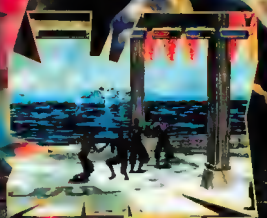
PERFECT WEAPON

4 lethal alien attackers can gang up on you, using FIRST and ONLY Behavioral Artificial Intelligence.

Camera angles move as fast as you do.

Take on 20 merciless alien species with over 100 martial arts moves.

Explore over 1,300 rendered environments across five hostile worlds.



"Perfect Weapon may very well end up as one of the most unique and exciting products to hit the PlayStation this year!"
Greg Off, Editor-in-Chief, PS Extreme

"I have reviewed over 1,400 games and have never seen anything like Perfect Weapon."
Lawrence Neves, Senior Editor, Game Pro

Survival lies cloaked in deception...

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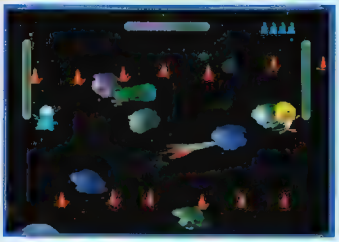
SPACE JAM

ACCLAIM • AVAILABLE DECEMBER

So, are you a little tired of the true basketball sims? Fed up with the standard NBA Shootout is better than NBA live 96 argument, or vice versa? Well, take a break, you deserve it; and while you're relaxing, Acclaim may have just what the Doctor ordered: Space Jam, starring Bugs Bunny and Michael Jordan is set for a 4th quarter release. If the word "Jam" is in a title from Acclaim, you can pretty much bet the farm that it's a basketball game, however, this one puts a new twist on the theme. This intergalactic basketball adventure has you on the court with the Looney Tunes characters and the likes of Micahel Jordan, teaming up to take on the evil alien "Monstars", who have their own arsenal of NBA talent. Space Jam could be one of the monster (no pun intended) hits of the Holiday season. Look for a complete review next month.



EXPECTING

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Motor Toon Grand Prix™ is the wackiest race ever!

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- 10 topsy-turvy tracks.
- Looney weapons to lob.
- Hidden bonus levels.
- Link cable compatible.
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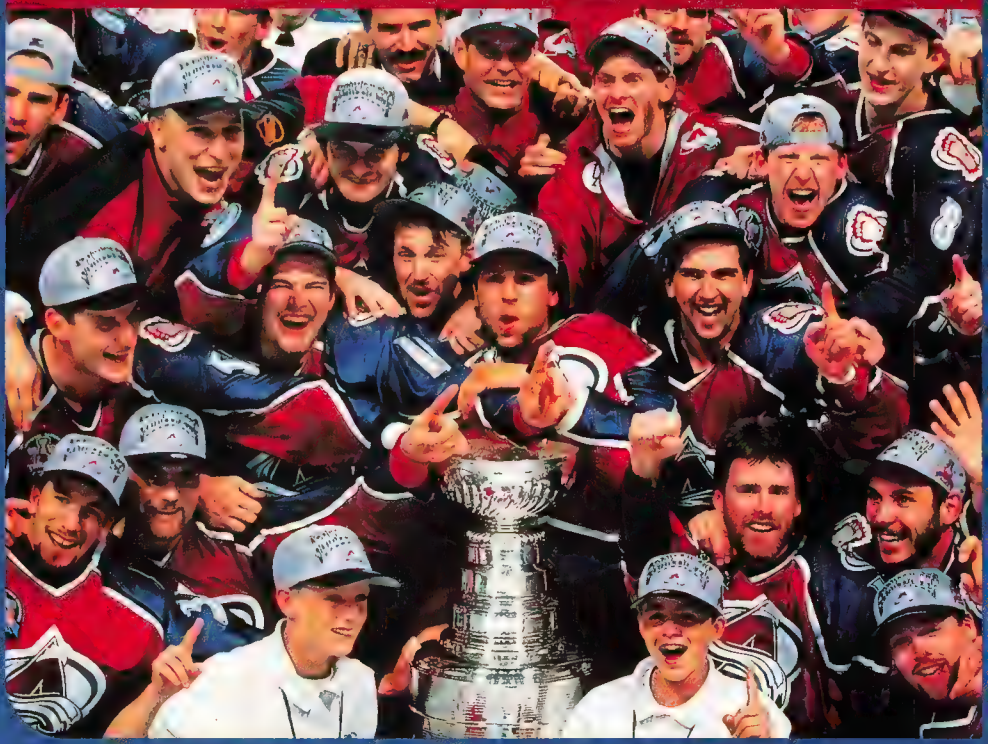
AWESOME REVIEWS.

IT'S LIKE WINNING THE CUP WITH A SLAPSHOT FROM THE BLUELINE.



"NHL POWERPLAY '96 IS WITHOUT A DOUBT THE BEST HOCKEY GAME EVER MADE FOR ANY SYSTEM ON ANY PLANET!!! THE INCREDIBLE LOOK AND PLAY LEAVE YOU NO CHOICE BUT TO GO OUT AND BUY THE GAME."
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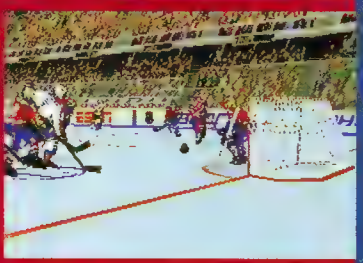
"POWERPLAY HAMMERS FACEOFF OPPOSITION... RARELY DOES A VIDEO GAME DELIVER THE ESSENCE OF THE SPORT...POWERPLAY'S GRAPHICS AND GAMEPLAY SKATE AWAY WITH THE CUP."
-GAMEPRO

"POWERPLAY'S GAMEPLAY IS SECOND TO NONE."
-COMPUTER GAMING WORLD

"THE GAME THAT STOLE THE TORCH FROM EA'S NHL SERIES AND BROUGHT THE SPORT OF HOCKEY INTO THE 32-BIT AGE."
-NEXT GENERATION

"THE STRONGEST COMBINATION OF KILLER GRAPHICS AND SOLID GAMEPLAY TO DATE."
-CYBER SPORTS



NHL POWERPLAY '96

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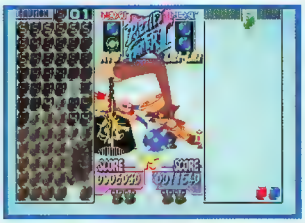
2XTREME

SONY • AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

The sequel to one of the best-selling PlayStation games is on its way! Sony's 2Xtreme picks up where ESPN Extreme Games left off, with new courses, a player creation option, an all-new snowboarding level, power-ups and in-flight moves, and much more. For those of you that didn't own a PlayStation last year, 2Xtreme, like its predecessor, takes to the streets with in your face racing action that requires you to master everything from street to jungle courses, on different forms of transportation — namely in-line skates, a mountain bike, snowboard and skateboard. But racing is not all that this game is about. You must take on your competitors in a little hand-to-hand combat, and try to rack up points by successfully negotiating your way through gates — all the while, avoiding obstacles like pedestrians, trees, boulders, cars and busses, and other bad stuff. Look for 2Extreme to hit retail shelves in November and for our review next month.

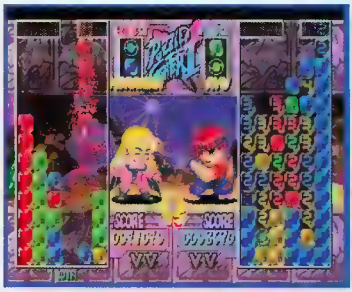
EXTREME

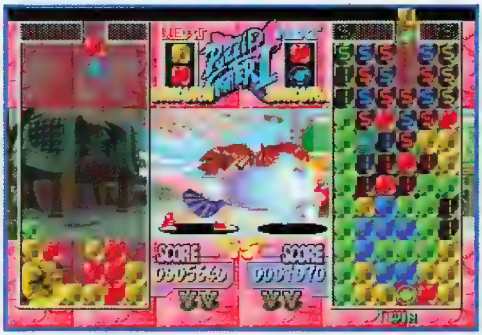


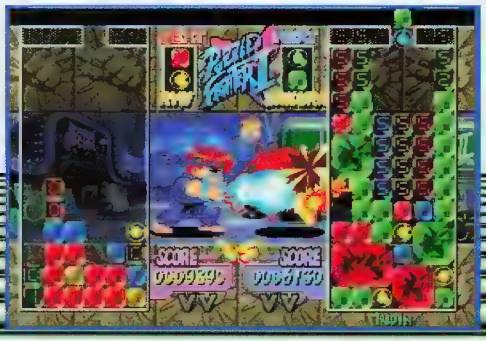
SUPER PUZZLE FIGHTER 2X

CAPCOM • AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

If you thought you had seen it all when it came to the Street Fighter Franchise (can you say Street Fighter the Movie?) then think again, because hot from the arcades in Japan, and straight to your Sony PlayStation, comes one of the most addictive and frustratingly fun puzzle games ever to be experienced, Super Puzzle Fighter. That's right, Capcom's entered the puzzle arena with their own version of the now-legendary falling block game. In Puzzle Fighter, two players attempt to fill the other's playfield with stacks of multi-colored gems. The key to the game is to arrange the gems in the proper order so they cause serious chain reactions, which eliminate your gems and send them crashing down onto the other player's screen. All the while, the action is played out with cute-style, Super Deformed Street Fighter and Darkstalker characters. Super Puzzle Fighter isn't due out until the end of the year, but it's already apparent that this is a gem of a game (dumb pun intended.) Look for a review soon.







NHL '97

EA SPORTS • AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

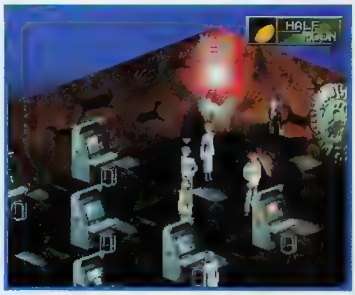
EA Sports is nearing ever closer to release with the PlayStation version of NHL Hockey 97, the latest in its successful hockey franchise. We have had a "preview-only" version of the game for about two weeks and what we have seen is VERY impressive. NHL 97 is the first EA Sports title to take advantage of polygon-based characters and the level of realism this graphic style affords is, in a word, spectacular. Every team uniform, including logo's, names and numbers is accurate and the details clearly visible. In addition, the game has an impressive array of features, as we have come to expect from the NHL series, that includes user records, full season play, instant replay, multiple camera angles, TV style, broadcast-quality presentation that includes a rink announcer, all of the teams and players, a deep statistical database and much more. We will review NHL Hockey 97 in our December issue, when we will feature it, head-to-head, against Sony's NHL Face Off '97.

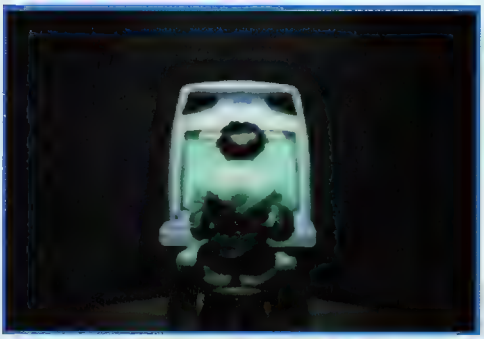
EXPECTING

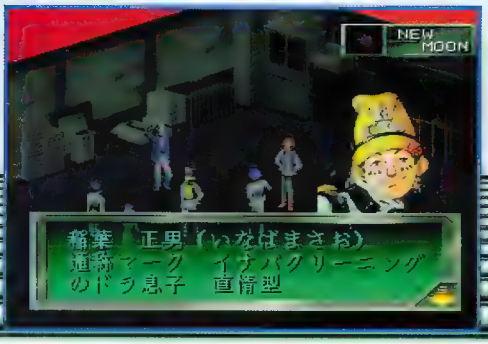
PERSONA

ATLUS • AVAILABLE DECEMBER

The RPG is alive and well on the PlayStation this Fall. With only one RPG available in the first year of the system, the timing couldn't be better for these new releases. Atlus will be introducing the first chapter in their Revelations series entitled "Persona". The story goes something like this; in the not to distant future, mankind conquers that pesky problem known as dimensional travel, which, of course, has its downside. The problem is that the peaceful city you grew up in is now a pit stop for just about any kind of intergalactic vermin you can think of. Your mission is simple; destroy them before they take over your quiet little neighborhood. Based on the very popular (in Japan) Megami Tensei series, Persona will offer over one hundred hours of gameplay and over 300 different villains to do battle with, not to mention the ability to morph any member of your party into a more powerful being. Look for a full review next month.



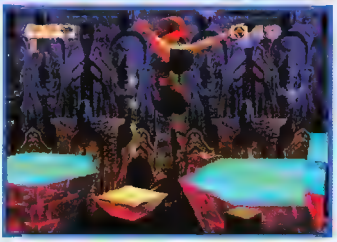


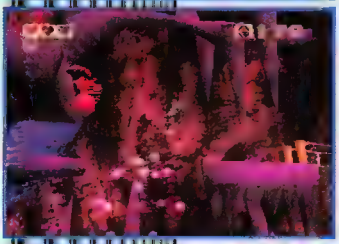


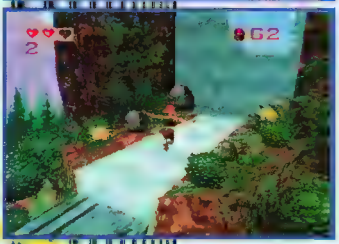
PANDEMONIUM

CRYSTAL DYNAMICS • AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

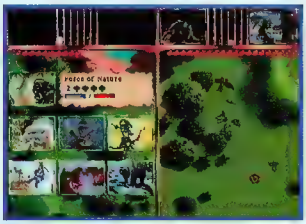
Here it is, what should be our final look at Crystal Dynamics "Pandemonium", before we get the reviewable copy. Each time we get a new build of this title, we can't wait to print the new shots. As we reported last month, and on our June cover, "Pandemonium" is a classic platform game that is taking the 3D capabilities of the Playstation to new heights. While linear in nature, it features a very responsive camera system that helps magnify the depth of the game. Pandemonium will emphasize precise jumping, very similar to that of Sony's "Crash Bandicoot". It also throws in an element of speed, however, that none of the current crop of 32-bit platformers have. This combination, along with some of the most stunning 3D graphics ever seen, should make "Pandemonium" one of the top selling titles this holiday season. Look for a complete review next month.

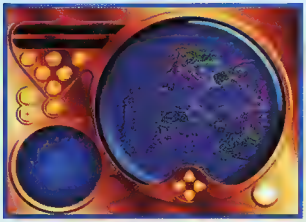


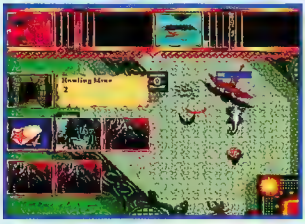




EXPECTING



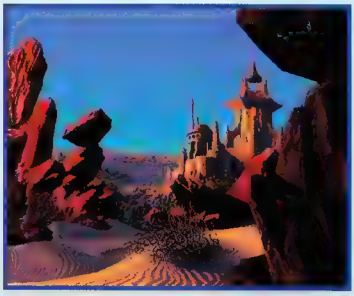


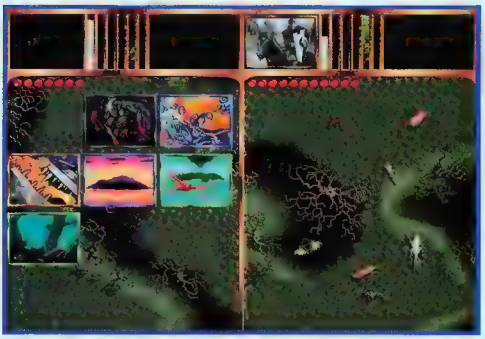


MAGIC: THE GATHERING

ACCLAIM • AVAILABLE DECEMBER

Acclaim is set to release a new fantasy game entitled Magic: The Gathering- BattleMage. Based on the card game that has sold more than 2 billion sets world wide, Acclaim hopes to take advantage of the growing popularity of the fantasy genre. (there's that word again!) The game is generally a head to head combat game for two or more players using cards that represent various spells and other spooky stuff. Basically, what happens is, you assume the role of one of six planeswalkers and challenge other planeswalkers in a fast paced, real time battle, using one of two game play modes. The duel mode is you and the computer, mano y mano, and it also allows you to build a custom library of spells and such. The campaign mode is sort of like season play, that changes every time you play it. It sounds like all the ingredients are there to satisfy even the most discriminating fantasy gamer, but we'll let you know next month when we get our hands on a reviewable copy.





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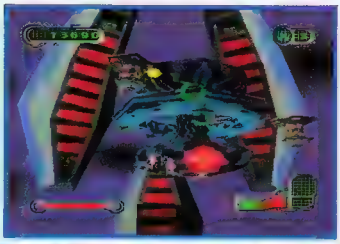
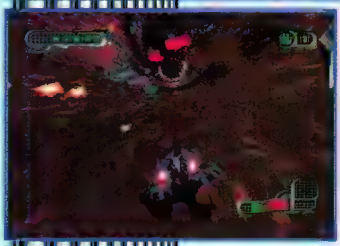
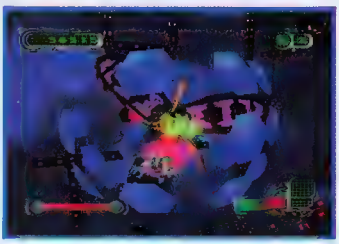


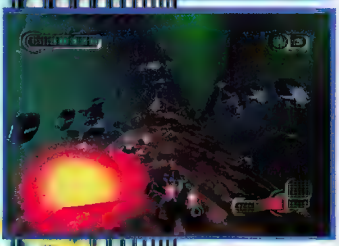
NANOTEK WARRIOR

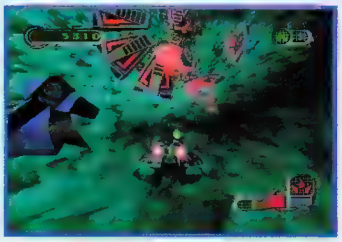
VIRGIN • AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

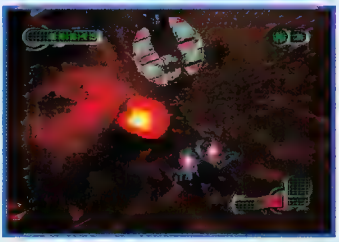
Here's a game that hasn't had a lot of marketing hype. In fact, if we hadn't seen it tucked away in the back of Sony's huge display at E3, we wouldn't have even known it was coming out. Nanotek Warrior, developed by Tetragon and published by Virgin Interactive, is a fast-paced, intense 3D shooter that is reminiscent of one of our all-time favorite titles, Stun Runner, which, sadly, never came out on any home console (the exception being the Atari Lynx). In the game, you pilot a Nano Tek ship, through ten hostile, microscopic environments collecting a variety of weapons and power-ups while trying desperately to stay alive. Nanotek Warrior is definitely a classic "gamer's game" that has some very nice 32-bit enhancements; such as 3D software acceleration, translucent elements, gourad shading and ultra-smooth texture-mapping. In addition, like most action-intensive shooters, there's a brain-blistering techno soundtrack to accompany the destruction. Nanotek is scheduled for November and we should be back with the review in next month's issue.











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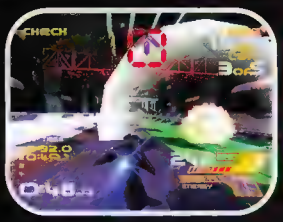

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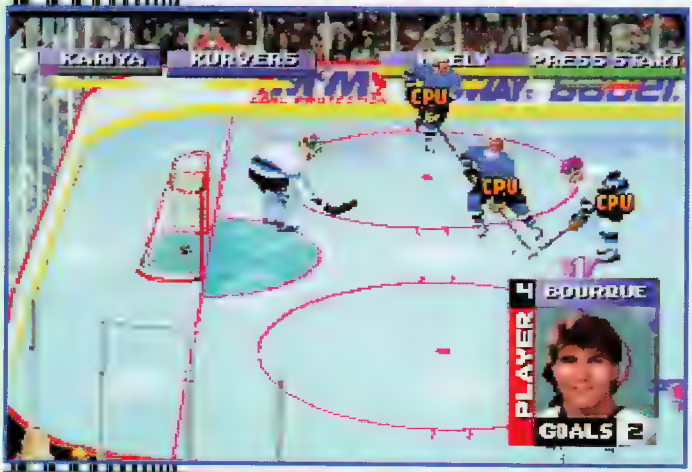
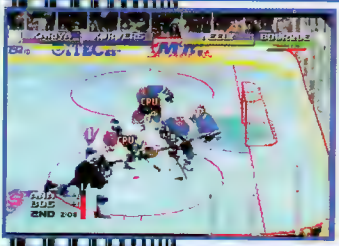
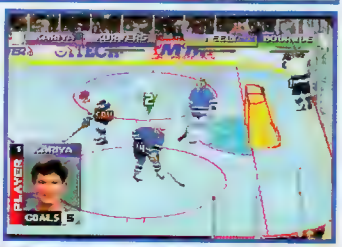
OPEN ICE

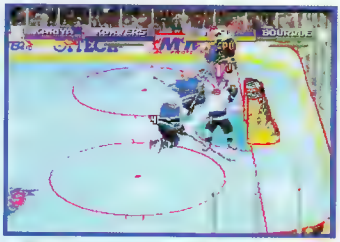
WILLIAMS • AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

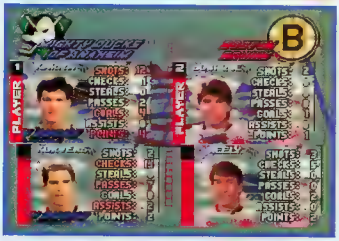
Open Ice, the popular arcade coin-op, modeled after the mega-successful NBA Jam series, is on its way to the PlayStation, via Williams, this November. If you aren't familiar with this title, then picture NBA Jam on ice and you'll get it, get it? Open Ice takes a humorous, arcade-style approach at two-on-two hockey, with plenty of action, colorful commentary and fierce competition -- which is what makes these titles so darned-much fun. Like its basketball counterpart, there will be plenty of hidden characters and secret codes, and, when it's complete, Open Ice is destined to be a faithful, 100% exact conversion. Up to four players can play simultaneously, with the use of a multitap, and standings can be saved to memory card. What else could you ask for? At this point, the game is about 40% complete and is planned for a November release. We should have more coverage in an upcoming issue.











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NHL FACE OFF 97

SONY • AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

The ice is certainly heating up these days. With the release of Virgin's Powerplay and EA and Sony's new rev's on the horizon, the hockey rink looks like the place to be. Sony was definitely the king of the ice last year and, by all indications , they aim to keep it that way in '97. NHL Face Off '97 will be sporting a number of new features this year, including: a new passing system that will allow players to control every player on the ice – simultaneously, updated rosters with the expansion Phoenix Coyotes, an improved, expanded database that will give exhaustive team, player and season stat's, new player animations, a rink announcer, incredibly fast gameplay, fighting, complete player management, player cards, user records, multiple camera angles and a game shell that allows for the quickest load time (from CD) that we have ever seen ... it's almost as fast as cartridge loads! We will review NHL Face Off '97 in our December issue and the game should ship in early November.

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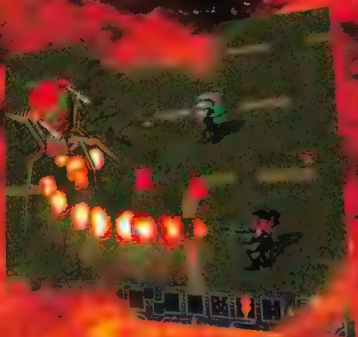

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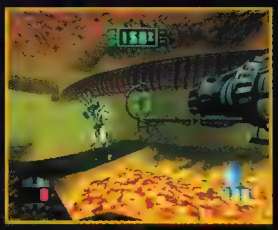

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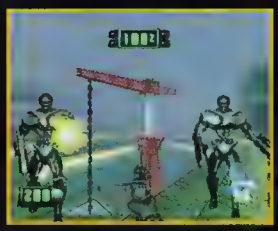

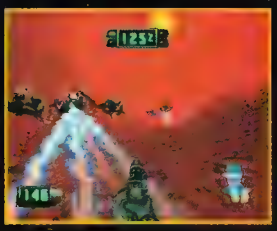

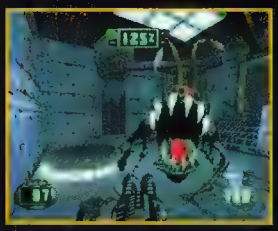

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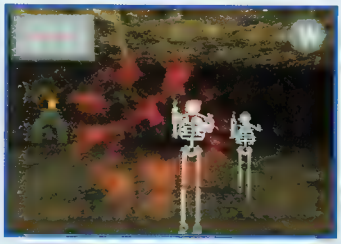
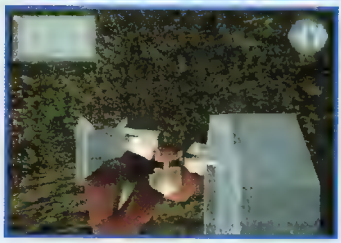
KING'S FIELD II

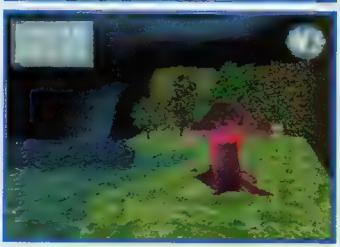
ASCII • AVAILABLE NOVEMBER

ASCII is busy putting the finishing touches on what should be one of the most anticipated 3D role playing adventures of the year, King's Field II. Back in March, we put the original King's Field on the cover of our magazine and awarded it the coveted Gold. Now, King's Field II is almost here and, judging from the the fresh new beta version that they just laid on us, they've taken all that was good about the first and made it even better.

The sequel basically uses the same engine as the first, but with improved speed and smoother animation, a larger world to explore, more special effects (like the spectacular colored transparency effects for the new magic spells), a much larger variety of new enemies, more powerful weapons and, well, basically just more of what we all want. We'll be back real soon with the big review, so keep your eyeballs focused right here, where they belong, and we'll treat 'em right.







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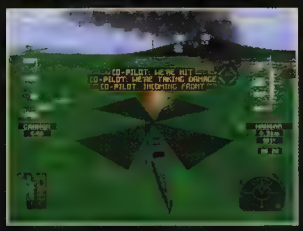

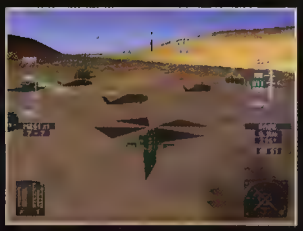

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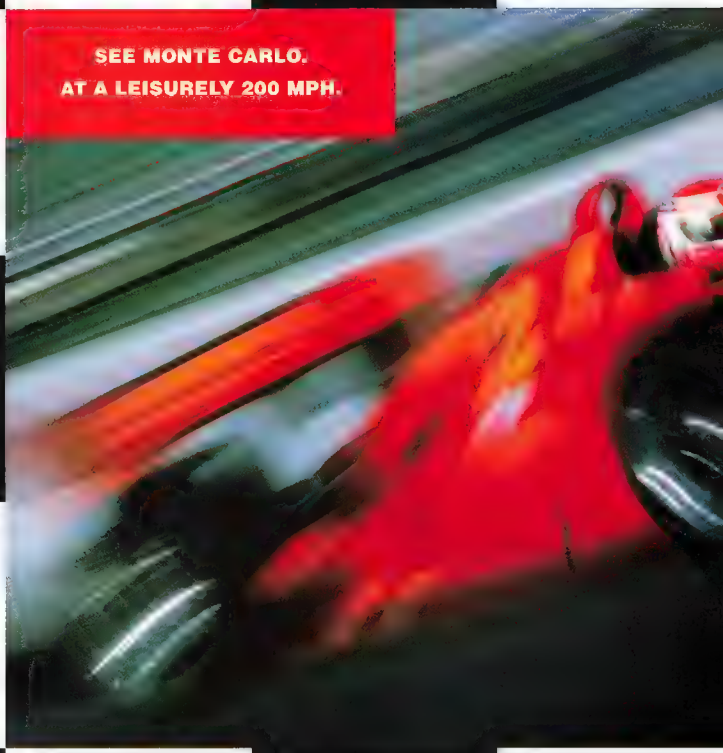
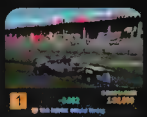


Guitar gurus Steve Vai and Joe Satriani provide the high-octane road tunes. (Playable in mono, stereo, Dolby Surround or Q-Sound.)



Trees, buildings, grandstands and surrounding scenery added from over 100 hours of video footage. (Sorry, winner's circle bimbos not included.)

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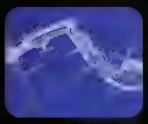
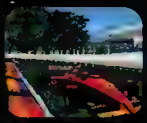


Hit 17 of the world's most famous race tracks -- each recreated from official FIA surveyor's maps, each replicating actual specs.

Choose your race style: Arcade mode, two player mode (for you competitive types) or Grand Prix sim mode for hard-core purists.



Hyper realism to the extreme: 256 colors, 150,000 polygons at 30 fps. Ambient in-car sounds taken from actual F1 cockpits.

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NFL GameDay '97

The biggest story in the PlayStation's short history has been the success of NFL GameDay. The original title was released last November, with little fanfare and limited expectations for the title. It seemed the next-generation sports gaming world was waiting for Madden, and the thought of another developer/publisher taking the gridiron throne away from the reigning kings of football was akin to Newt Gingrich being sworn-in as the mayor of San Francisco.

While EA Sports desperately struggled with Madden '96 (a title that was eventually canceled, in favor of the recently released '97 version), a little-known group of programmers, designers, artists and musicians at Sony's San Diego, California studio set out to create gaming history.

NFL GameDay was revolutionary, not simply in the new, real-time 3D world that it presented to the football fan, but in gameplay and a computer AI engine that redefined our expectations for interactive sports entertainment. GameDay gave the consumer unprecedented control over the players. On offense, the game required that you learn the nature of defensive tendencies, and its (the defense's) reaction to your play calling. As I have played the game over the past year, I found the beauty of the offensive game to lie in the absolute realism of role-playing as the quarterback, and, while walking up to the line of scrimmage, scanning the defensive formation and quickly determining whether my selected play was going to work, or whether I was going to have to audible at the line. Once the ball was snapped, you could spin, dive, stiff arm, speed burst, jump and hurdle your way toward the end zone. Other games had attempted to bring this level of realism home,

EXTREME

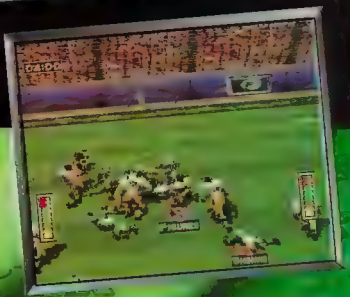
but GameDay was the first to do it successfully, with a sense of speed and total play control that took sports games to another plateau.

The same could be said for the gameplay experience on defense, and the impact may have been even greater than the play on offense. In the 16-bit world, the Madden and Montana/NFL games took a very arcade/offensive football approach. Defense was merely an afterthought in the one-player game ... one where the player was simply marking time until he got his hands on the ball again. In GameDay, defense became a priority. From audibles and shifting alignments at the line of scrimmage, to brutally effective spears and "swimmies", your time on the other side of the ball was just as all-encompassing and intense as it was with the ball in your hands.

The net effect of the GameDay development team's efforts was to set a new design standard for all other football games to match. More importantly for Sony, the game launched the most successful 32-bit sports franchise, one that has challenged EA Sports at every turn, beat them at many, and one that has quickly built a reputation for leading-edge game design. The only question remaining for the original GameDay team was: "How do we do a better job this year than we did last?" Their answer is NFL GameDay '97.

"Everybody is doing 32-bit graphics, Sony Sports does 32-bit gameplay. As good as the original GameDay and NCAA GameBreaker are, GameDay '97 is better," said Chris Whaley, Executive Producer at Sony Interactive Studios. He continued: "We have seen the new product being offered to the consumer by our competition, and we are convinced that, while they have been able to replicate the look of GameDay, no one has come close to duplicating the gameplay experience of the original GameDay. Now, we have our second generation product coming to market and the gameplay and feature lists far surpass anything that the sports gamer has experienced."

NFL GameDay '97 will feature 30 frame per second animation, new diving, catching and hitting animations, new crowd and PA voice and sound effects, statistical tracking, both offense and defense, that runs far deeper than last year's game, unlimited playing perspectives, motion-captured player graphics featuring the Oakland Raiders' Tim Brown, a playbook that is double the size



of last year's, featuring over 500 plays, free agent signings and player trades, the ability to create players, 30 NFL stadiums and entirely new play mechanics. GameDay '97 builds upon all of the offensive and defensive moves that were offered in last year's game with a number of advanced moves that are accessed through the L2 trigger. Players will be able to dive over the pile, shoulder charge, double spin, do a simultaneous hurdle and speed bursts, a simultaneous stiff arm and speed burst, pitch and make a high, one-handed catch. On defense, they will be able to dive tackle high, shoulder charge, switch to the deepest cover man, jump higher, execute a simultaneous swim and speed burst, or a simultaneous shiver and speed burst. The most exciting new feature, however, is found in the passing game, where players will have access to a passing meter that will allow them to lead receivers, fire the perfect bullet pass, or purposely under throw a receiver coming back toward the ball.

Mr. Whaley had the following to offer on GameDay's new play mechanics: "What we are trying to achieve in GameDay '97 is total gameplay immersion. We want the sports gamer to feel the speed, excitement and pain of being

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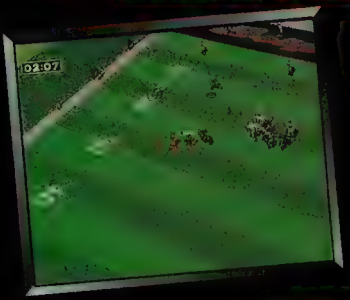

on a professional football field. Our team will do whatever it takes to suspend disbelief in the player and create the ultimate football experience." He continued: "The advanced moves that we are offering the player in GameDay '97 have all been implemented with the idea that the PlayStation sports gamer wants nothing less than the very best, most realistic experience possible. An example of this is our new computer AI system. We are so confident in our artificial intelligence system that we have a new option that allows the user to adjust the IQ of the computer opponent, at any time during the game. The player will actually be able to SEE the difference in how the computer approaches the game. Another example: How many times have you played a game where you were in a fourth and goal situation and you were thinking to yourself, 'If I could just do a Marcus Allen-style dive here, it would be six'? In GameDay '97 you can do that. We are constantly listening to the input our customers give us, and our project team loves the game of football. We think that GameDay '97 represents the culmination of everything that our sports studio has achieved to this point in time, and we our looking forward to November, when football fans will get a chance to take the game home and put it to the test."

NFL GameDay '97 will ship to retail just before Thanksgiving and Sony is telling us that we will have a reviewable game for our January '97 issue.

Dave

If you're still reading this, you're just the kind of thrill-seeking lunatic we're looking for. Because that's what it takes to play 2 Xtreme. The most insanely extreme game we could possibly throw your way. Whether you choose in-line skating in Las Vegas, mountain biking in Africa, snowboarding in Japan or skateboarding in L.A., your threshold for pain will be pushed to the point of unconsciousness as you punch and kick your way to the finish line. It has 12 tracks and a bunch of new maneuvers like 360s, ollie-airs, carves, backside rail grabs, Japans and more. You can grab Power Ups along the way, which help you to

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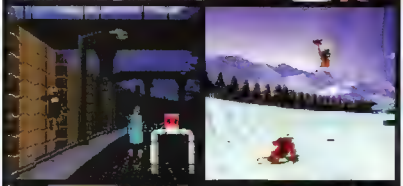

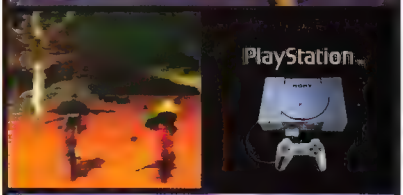

really pump up your point totals. You can play alone or against another person, with an all-new point system which allows you to compete in a season and earn points based on finish, maneuvers and how many opponents you knock down along the way. You just have to ask yourself one question. How crazy are you?

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NFL QUARTERBACK CLUB 97

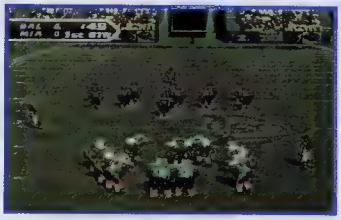
PUBLISHED BY ACCLAIM - DEVELOPED BY IGUANA

Acclaim's resident sports game developers, Iguana, would seem to have the best of both worlds in "NFL Quarterback Club 97." (Some of you may remember our review of the '96 version of this game that appeared earlier this year — the game was canceled in favor of this new version.) They have gone for the broadcast presentation style found in Madden 97 and have attempted to deliver the same level of advanced gameplay found in Sony's NCAA GameBreaker. The problem is, they don't really hit the nail on the head in either case and have, instead, delivered a lifeless version of the game of football.

It all starts and ends with the gameplay speed ... it is VERY slow. From the opening kickoff, you will find yourself jamming your thumb into the controller pad and buttons, hoping you can make the on-field action speed up. Graphically, the character animation is rough and the default camera puts you too close to the action, especially during an end zone celebration or at the completion of a play — these tight shots cause a lot of pixel explosion and are pretty ugly. Although, Iguana was able to deliver actual player numbers on the jerseys. Other animation causes things to happen similar to what happened in last year's game — things like speed bursts that are executed by the ball carrier sliding as if on a sheet of ice. The combination of the slow game speed and the response time in player animation, ultimately, gives you the sense that you are not really controlling the proceedings and the game ceases to be any fun at that point.

The play mechanics and overall football engine are not helped by any of this. While the game offers a host of user-controllable moves like: spins, dives, jukes, jumping, spearing, speed bursts and the like, they are executed in such haphazard fashion that, by the time the move is executed, you've almost forgotten that you made the move!

I don't want to berate Iguana or Acclaim, because a real attempt has been made at loading QB Club 97 with some great features, but the game just isn't fun to play. It is very similar to Madden 97 in that regard; only the graphic and broad-



There's also no play-by-play, stadium or color announcer in the game. This could be good or bad — depending on your feelings on the subject; but it is a glaring omission competing games all feature some voice system.

Finally, for those of you that may think I harp on the quality of the computer opponent too much, I give you this ... I am playing as the 49'ers, against the Jaguars, the Jag's have the ball with 1:40 left to go in the first half (playing five minute quarters) — the Jag's QB takes a knee! Astonished, I said to myself "no way, it's got to be a glitch." The next play, he starts to run down the play clock at the line, since I hadn't called a time out. In a five minute quarter, 1:40 represents 5:00 in a real game ... and the guy's running out the clock?!!! Sorry folks, I can't forgive something like this, we've come too far in console football games to settle for: "Oh, we'll fix that in NEXT year's rev."

In terms of the bottom line, and how all of this shakes out, I offer the following: NFL Quarterback Club 97 has gameplay that is on par with Madden 97, a graphic/broadcast experience that is not as strong and, like Madden, an overall package that is not in the same league as GameBreaker.

Dave

cast package isn't anywhere near as polished. There is also some really weird stuff in the game — like season play where you can choose the year in where you will be playing. (I tried this feature out and stopped counting after the computer had gone past the year 3300!)

THE BOTTOM LINE

72%

In terms of the bottom line, and how all of this shakes out, I offer the following: NFL Quarterback Club 97 has gameplay that is on par with Madden 97, a graphic/broadcast experience that is not as strong and, like Madden, an overall package that is not in the same league as GameBreaker.

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A brief history lesson: Tecmo was the king of 8-bit football on the Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), featuring both an NFL and NFLPA license long before it became fashionable to do so. The game was a critical and sales success and it really paved the way for what EA Sports, Sega and Sony would accomplish in the years to follow. The 8-bit game is considered by many to be one of the all-time classic video games. The turf was not so green for Tecmo in the 16-bit world, however, as both EA Sports and Sega Sports dominated the small Japanese software publisher with advanced gameplay and animation that Tecmo couldn't deliver. Things haven't changed much. We're now in the 32-bit generation and Tecmo still finds themselves a step behind the times.

The gameplay is ported directly from the older titles. You STILL can only control one player (no switching allowed) on defense and, on offense, you have to cycle through active receivers, via the circle button, one at a time. The only special moves are stiff arms and dives, and a weird speed-burst option where, every-

time you hit the button, the ball carrier raises both arms into the air (football in hand) and looks like he's running away with a stolen loaf of bread. I was so bored playing defense that I would just call defensive formations blindly (it didn't matter, I still got the ball back most of the time) and I couldn't be stopped on offense.

"Well, that's all well and good," you say. "But I liked the TSB series because of the player management features." Fair enough, all of the roster management features that made the original product so great are still present in the 32-bit title. The problem is, the competition caught up with them and they are offering the player just as much, if not more in this area. In particular, the black & white play-

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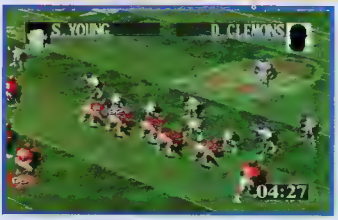
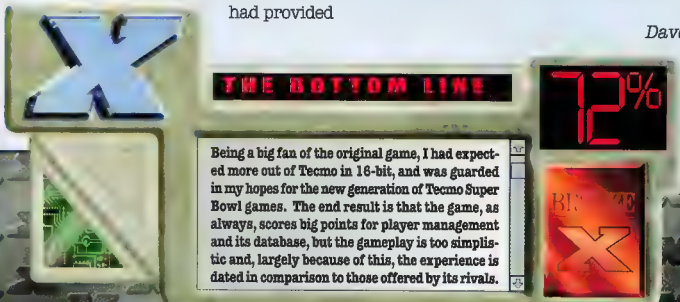


er mug shots that appear after a play look kind of dated, when compared to those found in the PlayStation version of Madden 97.

It's too bad, going by the screen shots that Tecmo had provided us for the last few issues, I was starting to think that TSB might be a contender ... nope. Pretty pictures will sting you every time. The animation is rough and very "16-bitty" and the speed of play is slower than even NFL Quarterback Club 97. I can't tell you how frustrating this experience was, especially after playing Sony's speed-burning "NCAA GameBreaker." Lastly, the generic play-by-play guy gives the kind of information and analysis that you would expect in an arcade game, but not a dedicated, home, football simulation.

Being a big fan of the original game, I had expected more out of Tecmo in 16-bit, and was guarded in my hopes for the new generation of Tecmo Super Bowl games. But, if old games were as good as our memories of them, we'd still be playing "Frogger". The end result is that the game, as always, scores big points for player management and its database, but the gameplay is too simplistic and, largely because of this, the experience is dated in comparison to those offered by its rivals.

Dave



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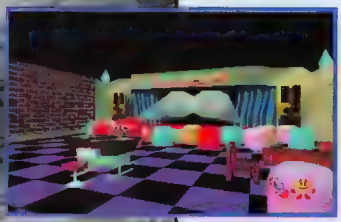
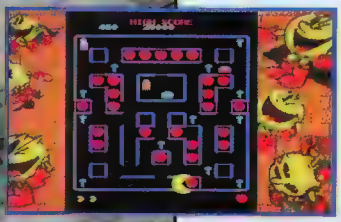
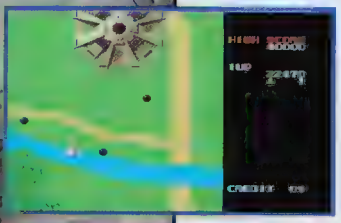
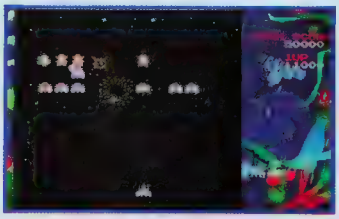


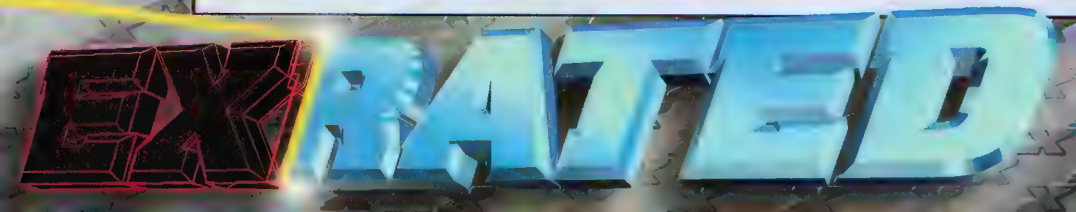


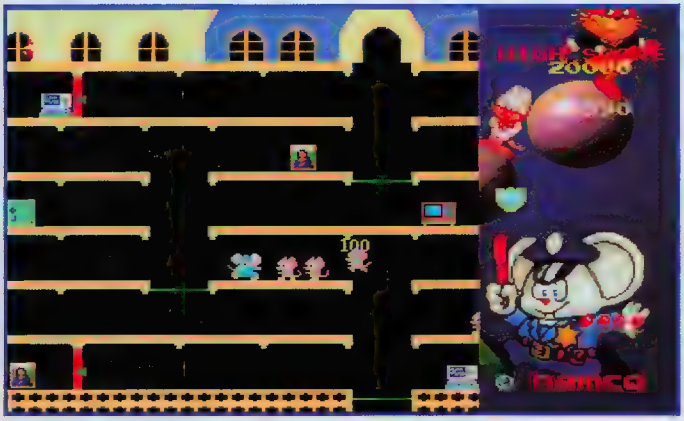


It's flashback time again, kiddies. You know, when girls wore sweaters off of one shoulder and had those wool blankets wrapped around their legs. Everyone was dancing up a storm trying to land a gig as a Broadway Rockette or Cat, and doing that "maniac" thing. Oh wait a minute, that's Flashdance. Sorry about that, chief. However, if we do "flashback" to that video arcade scene of the same time period, we will find most of the titles that Namco has put into Vol. 2 somewhere in the arcade. Included in the second release of a scheduled five volume set is (in no particular order) Xevious, Mappy, Gaplus, Grobda, Super Pac-Man, and Dragon Buster.

A quick glance at the titles listed in Volume 2 will tell you that, of the games you recognize, most are adaptations of previously successful games. For example, although Mappy was a moderate success at the time, it was certainly a descendent from the Pac-Man era, much like other games such as Lady Bug, Mouse Trap, and Venture. Still a fine play after all these years, Mappy may even find a whole new generation of fans on the Playstation. I cannot vouch for the success of Super Pac-Man, because by the time this title made it to the arcades, I had had my fill of yellow circles and "whacka whacka whacka" to the point were the mere sight of the game would make me break out into a cold sweat. Needless to say, I didn't dump too many quarters into the game which would see Pac-Man transform himself into some kind of Ultra(Pac)-Man and eat up the whole damn screen. I must admit, however, that after a decade or so, I'm on the road to recovery, and am able to sit down for short periods of time and play any of the Pac-Man variations, even that pinball/video game hybrid Baby Pac-Man contraption (Namco, just a thought: we want to see that one on any of the next releases, ok?). Next we have Gaplus, a shooter that has family ties to Galaxian, Galaga, Gorf, and every other shooter of the time that started with the letter "G". Although there are similarities between most of these games, they were all good enough to stand on their own merit due to the one thing that they did that the others didn't. In the case of Gaplus, it was the fact that you could seize an enemy ship (or two) and have it fight alongside your ship. Pretty cool for the time, and something I don't think I've seen since. Lastly, there's Xevious, the classic overhead view shooter that first brought lots of color and an earth type atmosphere to the space shooter genre. Now, I can remember plunk-







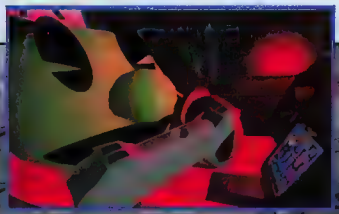
Xevious flawlessly, where if you've seen it on other 8-bit and 16-bit platforms, the color appears washed out. For me, Xevious is the big gun on Volume 2's list.

Now, if you're anything like the rest of us, your long term memory is significantly sharper than your short term ("Who was that on the phone, Eric?" "Uh, I don't know, some guy"), and you're asking yourself "Did I ever play Dragon Buster? I think not. Grobda? Not a chance!" Well the news is that Namco included these lesser known "bonus" titles as they were previously released only in Japan. Dragon Buster is a side scrolling adventure game, in-between a "Montezuma's Revenge", "Tutankham", and "Gateway to Apshai". It is very 8-bit looking, with few options other than slicing and dicing, and the occasional power up. It's worth a look, but not much more. As for Grobda, it's a pretty cool, fast paced "tank" game and may well have had moderate success if it had ever been released in the U.S.

If you saw our August issue, then you remember that I gave Namco's Museum Vol. 1 the excellent rating of 92%. This was due to the number of quality titles that it included. Basing the rating on how the games look or play isn't worthwhile, as the titles are all direct emulations of the arcade games. For this reason, I've got to rate Volume 2 as a 82%. One more top notch title and Vol. 2 could have been a contender. Unless you're a true fanatic of one of the games included (and I would buy it just for Xevious), you don't need to rush right out and buy this one. Better news is on the horizon though, as Vol. 3 will include Dig Dug and Galaxian. Stay tuned.

Eric

ing down quite a few quarters on this one, and am glad to note that my skills of dropping the bombs and shooting the silver floaty things hasn't diminished (much) since then. The PlayStation hardware is able to bring out all the color and detail of



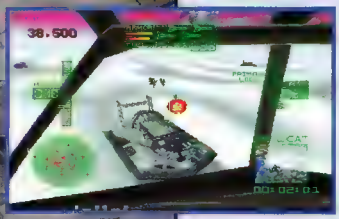
THE BOTTOM LINE

82%

One more top notch title and Vol. 2 could have been a contender. Unless you're a true fanatic of one of the games included (and I would buy it just for Xevious), you don't need to rush right out and buy this one. Better news is on the horizon though, as Vol. 3 will include Dig Dug and Galaxian. Stay tuned.

BLACK DAWN

PUBLISHED BY VIRGIN – DEVELOPED BY BLACK OPS

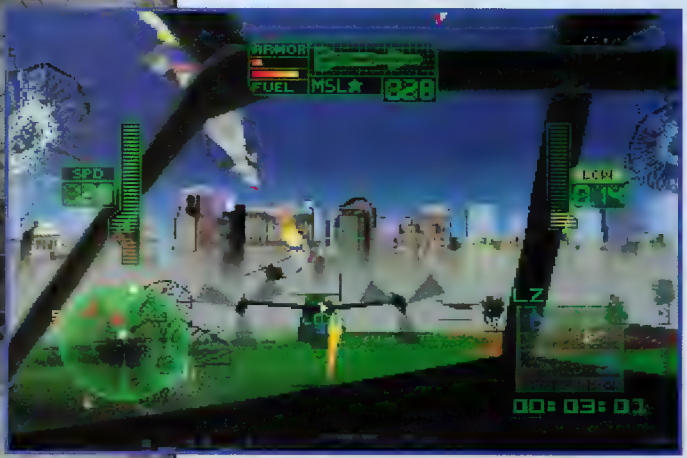


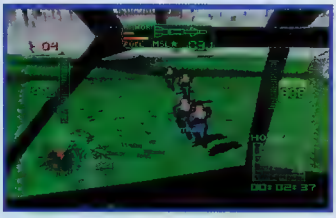
Building on the success of Agile Warrior, (even though most of the gaming press missed the mark on this one) Virgin and Black Ops Entertainment are readying themselves to release Black Dawn for the PlayStation. Black Dawn is the Helicopter sequel to this popular supersonic slaughterfest, and like its fixed wing brother, Black Dawn is pure arcade mayhem. Much like U.S. Gold's (read Eidos) Thunderstrike 2, Virgin's new release, while sim like in mission design, is a pure and simple shooter in execution. That's fine with me, because that's the way (uh ha,uh ha) I like it. (Please forgive the 70's flashback!)

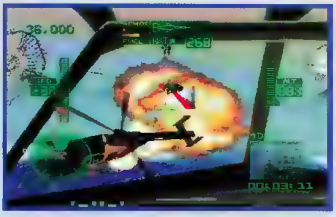
Borrowing themes from some of the more successful shooters on the market, BD allows you to choose from eight different missions with three difficulty levels. Your missions will range from suppressing terrorist activities in New York City, to taking the law into your own hands to deal the Colombian drug cartel a fatal blow. Although you only have one choice when it comes to the type of craft you will pilot, you have some very interesting choices when it comes to the weapons you'll use to extinguish the human debris, otherwise known as the enemy. As in Agile Warrior, your choice of weapon almost becomes an art

form. Being the slightly twisted pyro that I am, I go out of my way to find situations to use my napalm (smells like victory and all that). Along with the napalm, you've got rockets, missiles and cannons. Who could ask for anything more? Additionally, you've got four different camera angles from which to view the destruction you are about to unleash. All things considered, not a bad line up; but, will Black Dawn live up to its older sibling's reputation for game play?

The key to success in any airborne shooter are the flight mechanics: too easy, and it comes across as a kids game; too difficult, and you have a game that's just too frustrating to play. Balance is the key. In BD, the flight controls get mixed reviews. While the directional control is pretty straight forward, the







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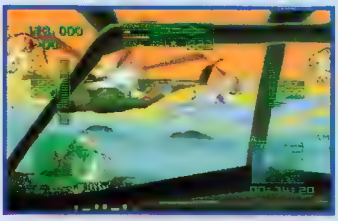
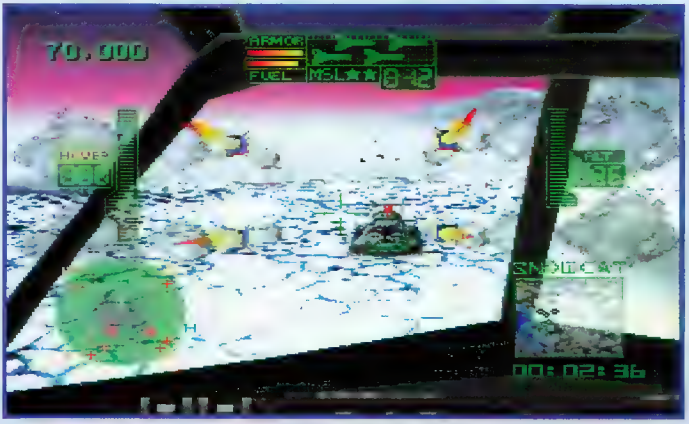
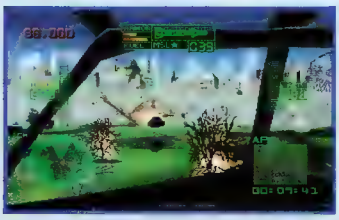




damage. However, on a more positive note, the basic flight control is very easy to pick up; it should take no time at all to become a lean, mean, killing machine.

Graphically, the game is just as smooth and beautiful to look at as Agile Warrior. The animation and flight characteristics border on perfection and the rotor wash has you thinking you're there. My one complaint about the look of the game, is when certain scenarios insert hostile jets into the equation. The jets seem to come out of nowhere, and they move slower than the helicopters. At one point, I was moving at eighteen miles an hour and I passed one of the jets! One other aspect of the game that requires attention is the originality, or lack of it. While attempting to build on the success of Agile Warrior and Thunderstrike 2 is definitely a good thing, a little originality would have been greatly appreciated. While there is some variation on the mission choices, Black Dawn plays very similar to both Agile Warrior and Thunderstrike 2. When all is said and done, Black Dawn is a Gold title because of game play, sound effects and graphics, but a game that, due to its lack of originality, falls short of conquering the genre.

Alex



altitude and speed controls are cumbersome at best. It's very difficult to shoot, change speeds and maneuver at the same time. This leads to multiple passes over the same target, increasing your chances of sustaining a considerable amount of

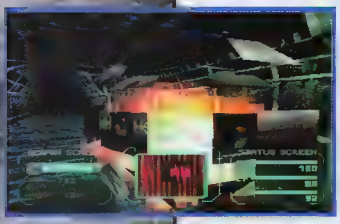
THE BOTTOM LINE

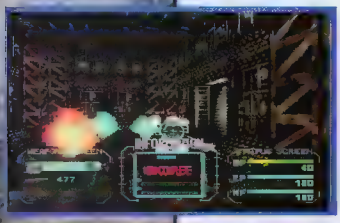
90%

While there is some variation on the mission choices, Black Dawn plays very similar to both Agile Warrior and Thunderstrike 2. When all is said and done, Black Dawn is a Gold title because of game play, sound effects and graphics, but a game that, due to its lack of originality, falls short conquering the genre.

EPIDEMIC

PUBLISHED BY SONY - DEVELOPED BY SONY MUSIC JAPAN



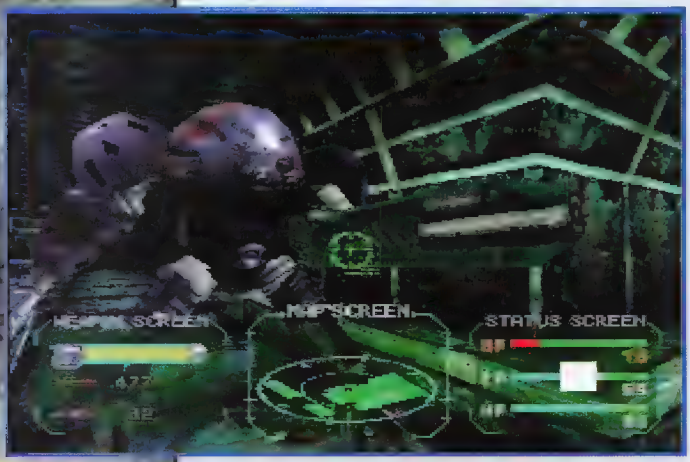


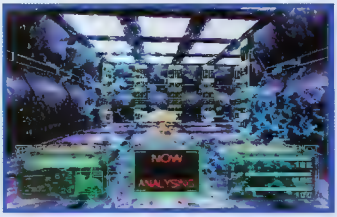
If you were around for the PlayStation's launch September last year, then you might remember one of the first few titles to be released with the system, a pretty crappy first-person shooter with an even worse name: Kileak: The DNA Imperative. In the game, you took control of a lumbering mech-robot and slowly navigated through badly textured hallways, while exchanging fire with an occasional enemy. Besides the shoddy graphics, Kileak lacked any intensity whatsoever, and it could possibly be said that more fun could be found spending a day in line at the DMV.

Now, flash to one year later, and we have the upcoming sequel, which has been intelligently titled "Epidemic" for its US debut (in Japan, it was named Kileak the Blood 2: Reason in Madness). And rightly so as this game is, thankfully, nothing like the original. Sony Music, the developers of both Kileak the DNA Imperative and Epidemic, started over from scratch, putting together an above average game, and the results are definitely to be commended.

The story is set in an underground city in the distant future. Apparently, a rampant virus was threatening to destroy the Earth's entire population, and what was left of the human race had to burrow underground to escape the disease. The Earth is now ruled by a tyrant named Michael Byflos, and his computer system, Sirus, ensures that the virus does not infect the remaining populace. In return, he has put strict population control measures on the general public, for the sole purpose of obtaining superior DNA samples. You, my friend, are part of a lone resistance group named Del Sol, whose sole purpose is to take down the maniacal Byflos Regime at any cost. Actually, this is a quick generalization, the plot is extremely deep and involving, and it is always evolving and branching out as you play the game, which is a fresh approach to this particular genre. In this way, Epidemic is sort of a "thinking man's Doom" as it is very story-intensive, complete with 30 to 60 second SGI-rendered intros in between and during gameplay.

Speaking of gameplay, Epidemic scores big





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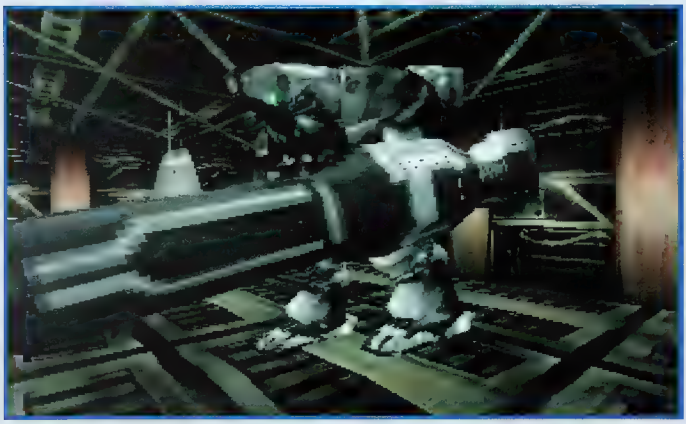
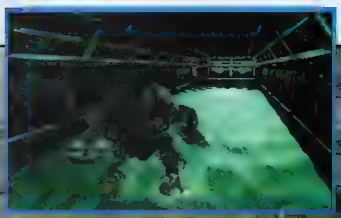




objects or items. In the game, there are many mini-puzzles to solve and getting any further can be hastened by missing a key or not throwing the right switch in the right order.

Your armored mech-suit has three available weapons to choose from, which range from lasers to missiles, and, at one point during the game, you find a new and more powerful suit with all-new weapons and armor. Your suit also comes equipped with its own 3D map that positions and rotates on screen as your playing.

The graphics are some of the best I've seen for this type of game, holding company with titles like Alien Trilogy and Universal's upcoming Disruptor. The 3D engine is beautifully textured and super-smooth; accurately conveying a dark and futuristic atmosphere. The rendered inter-missions are definitely some of the best I've ever seen, except for the laughable attempt at trying to lip-sync the voices to the animations.

So, with all of the good things I've had to say about Epidemic, why is it getting an admirable "Silver" score of 86% and not a "Gold"? Well, it boils down to one frustrating thing: You can only save your game after you've beaten an entire level. Now, I know that sounds like a petty complaint, but you go ahead and play a single level for 45 minutes to an hour, mapping out every square inch in the process, only to accidentally stumble into the boss unprepared and get obliterated ... then go back and do it all over. Believe me, that blows.

My recommendation is that Epidemic is a good solid title and should be given more than cursory glance. It's definitely not your typical first-person shooter and, in this case, that's not a bad thing. Check it out, and see for yourself.

Greg

in this category as well. Unlike most corridor games, it's shoot first and don't even bother to ask any questions later. In Epidemic, although there is quite a bit of that mentality, it's just as important to explore every inch of each level, as to not pass up any important

THE BOTTOM LINE

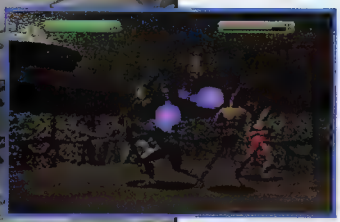
86%

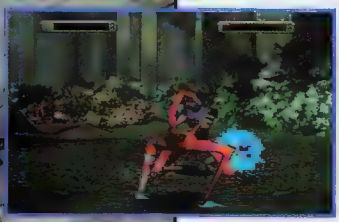
My reccommendation is that Epidemic is a good solid title and should be given more than cursory glance. It's definitely not your typical first-person shooter and, in this case, that's not a bad thing. Check it out, and see for yourself.

SILVER

PERFECT WEAPON

PUBLISHED BY ASC GAMES - DEVELOPED BY GREY MATTER



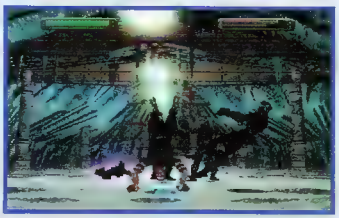


If you've been reading our magazine for, at least, the last few issues than you should be familiar with ASC Games (otherwise known as American Softworks) and the lineup of titles they have, ready for release, this holiday season. The first of these offerings is none other than, Perfect Weapon, which can be (and has been) best described as a mix between Tekken 2 and Resident Evil — two of this year's hottest titles. The question is, does Perfect Weapon deliver the same amount of wholesome goodness and all-around fun and excitement, that these two games have to offer? Well, you could keep on reading the article, that I've put so much hard work and effort into to find out, or you can cheat and read the Bottom Line. It's up to you; we're user friendly here at Dimension Publishing.

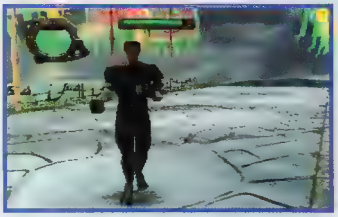
The story, for those of you reading for comprehension, goes something like this: Our hero, Captain Blake Hunter, is Earth Command Defense Corps top agent and (oh-so conveniently) world champion martial artist. One night, after competing in a kickboxing tournament, Blake is caught by surprise and knocked out before he can retaliate. The last thing he sees is a strange symbol, on a ring, on the hand of the creature, that sends him into unconsciousness. The next thing he knows, he is on some strange, outworldy, Ice Moon where the elements are nasty and the inhabitants even nastier. It's up to you, as Blake, to fight your way through a series of moons to an ultimate showdown with your unknown abductor and find out why you're here and what the devil is going on. Sounds pretty cool huh? ... We'll see.

Perfect Weapon can be broken down into two parts: fighting and exploration. Unfortunately, neither of these categories have been exploited to their full potential, leaving the game not as perfect as the title implies.

The exploration mode of the game is very much like Resident Evil, where you guide your 3D texture-mapped character through pre-rendered, high-resolution backgrounds, picking up items such as health, armor, power-ups, keys and special icons, which reveal hidden bonuses or secret areas. Controlling your character, while in this mode, is like swimming through a pool of Jello (of course,



EXPIRATED



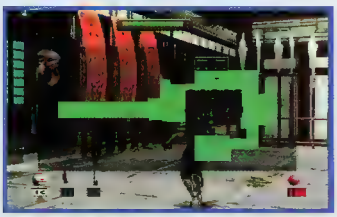
it's extremely difficult to judge where you're going and where you've been — even with an auto-map.

The fighting mode is even more frustrating and excruciatingly difficult. There are many instances where you'll be duking it out with up to four assailants at once, and while it looks cool, forget about actually using any strategy. Although Blake has a myriad of moves, a la Tekken, more often than not, he'll be ganged up upon and the only means of survival is to simultaneously mash all the buttons and hope for the best. Even though it's evident a lot of effort went into to making the fighting easy to control, getting Blake to line up with one certain character, while he's being pummeled by three others, is futile. What's worse, there are certain instances where you'll be fighting and get pushed off the screen out of sight. Even though the developers sought to rectify this by showing an on-screen arrow, indicating where Blake is, it's next to impossible to relocate him and get your bearings back without taking some damage. It's too bad, because I can see where the programmers were trying to go with the fighting and with more development time it could have worked.

Some of the finer points of Perfect Weapon are the drop-dead gorgeous pre-rendered graphics and texture-mapped characters. I have never seen such incredible detail in a game before. All of the characters must have been made with extremely high polygon counts as they are ultra-detailed and animate smoothly and realisticly.

What Perfect Weapon boils down to is an exercise in frustration that might be worth it if you don't mind working a little. Given more time, in the tweaking stages, this game could have been so much more. Instead, what we're left with is a game that screams with potential but, ultimately, falls short. Hey, there's always the sequel.

Greg



I've never actually swam through a pool of Jello, but Ben has, he told me so). Getting Blake to actually run, and keep running, takes a lot of effort. Hitting one unforeseen or invisible barrier will stop him dead in his tracks and there are so many various camera perspectives, that

THE BOTTOM LINE_

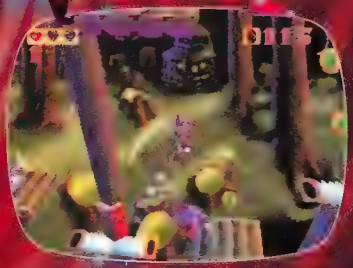
79%

What Perfect Weapon boils down to is an exercise in frustration that might be worth it if you don't mind working a little. Given more time, in the tweaking stages, this game could have been so much more. Instead, what we're left with is a game that screams with potential but, ultimately, falls short. Hey, there's always the sequel.

Check out our new website at http://www.crystald.com

Official Seal of Quality
SEGA
Rating Pending
K-A
AGES 6+

Just cause he's a joker doesn't mean he plays with a full deck.



Ante up to Crystal Dynamics' latest, underpin based 3D action game. Your team of twelve squad members includes Nikki, Fargus and Sid — an acrobatic wizard, a slightly twisted jester and his maniacal puppet-on-a-stick. Blur through swashbuckling expeditions, 3D levels of their deranged kingdom while shape-changing into a fire-blasting dragon or raging rhino. The freestyle 3D Camera cranks out the ultimate blend of brilliant visuals and knock-out perspectives. So just sit down and get taken for a ride, it's pure rocket fuel.

Pandemonium!™

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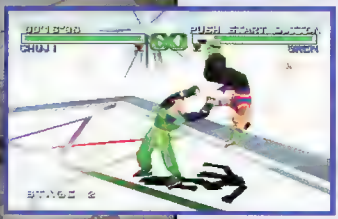
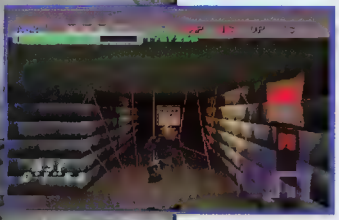
TOBAL NO. 1

PUBLISHED BY SONY - DEVELOPED BY SQUARE

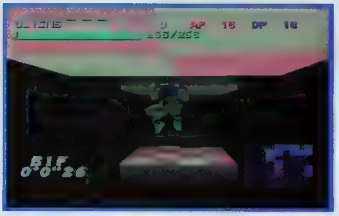




This Christmas season, Square & Sony plan to release their first title for the PlayStation; a fighting game (that's right, fighting) dubbed 'Tobal No. 1'. Based on characters and settings designed by Akira Toriyama, of Dragon Ball Z and Chrono Trigger fame, Tobal No. 1 was created by fighting game design veterans, Dream Factory, whose credits include VF1 and the Tekken series. The first time I saw Tobal No. 1 was at this year's E3. It caught my eye, I stopped, looked at it for about two minutes and went on, thinking, "ehh, another fighter." Now, I have had it for about two weeks, and to tell you the truth, it's still "just another fighter." Well, if you have already peeked at the rating, you'll notice Tobal No. 1 received an 87%. "This, for 'just another fighter'?" you say? "Not so fast" I reply. You see, the geniuses over at Square have finally given me (and probably a whole slew of other gamers) what I wanted. As a gameplay option, they have included a 3rd-person 'Quest Mode'. But more on that later.

From the get-go, there are eight selectable characters which include: Chuji, a short tempered young teenager; Oliems, a philosophical chickenman; Epon, a sassy young gal, who intimidates the fellows; Hom, a mining robot who admires a previous winner of the tournament; Fei, a solitude lover and Hom's tutor; Mary, a rather large busty woman; Ill, a tough, horned fighter; and Gren, a young, but competent, scrapper. Also, the boss characters are selectable, but only after you meet certain requirements. There are three modes to choose from: Tournament Mode, where one player takes on all the other CPU controlled characters; VS Mode, where two players can go at it; and Quest Mode, a 3rd-person/3D/RPG, which is, hands down, my favorite. In Quest mode, the player controls action from an over-the-shoulder perspective, navigating their character through 3D levels and fighting evil meanies, just as if they were playing in either of the other two modes.

Gameplay is a bit different from the norm. There are three attack buttons: high, mid and low, as well as separate jump and block buttons. Now I don't know about you, but for me, a jump button kills any hopes of decent fighting fun. The only



EXPIRED

time I didn't mind it was in Quest Mode, where it actually makes sense to have such a button. Like most 3D fighting games, there are sidesteps; but, to execute them, you must press up or down on the control pad. Add all that, in addition to semi-slow character movement and the Tournament/VS Modes can get old real quick. In addition to all the afore-mentioned controls, in Quest Mode you can pick up, eat, and throw items around at your leisure.

Graphically, Tobal No. 1 is extremely easy on the eyes. When you first load up the game, you are treated to a beautifully rendered intro which almost rivals that of Tekken 2. Once you get into actual combat, you can't help but be impressed. Gameplay moves along at a brisk 60 (yes 60) frames per second resulting in the most fluid character animation I have ever seen. The only noticeable problem is that the characters are extremely blocky looking. Obviously, this is to speed up the game, and it really doesn't affect gameplay. The sound effects are well done but are very repetitive and the laid-back music tracks, actually, don't even fit in with regular Tournament/VS Mode play. The only time I found myself enjoying the music was during (you guessed it) Quest Mode, where a swift techno track adds to the excitement.

As far as fighting games go, Tobal No. 1 is decent. As far as games go, Tobal No. 1 is very fun stuff. The Quest Mode sets Tobal No. 1 apart from its competitors and was the only thing that kept me playing hour after hour. I definitely recommend checking it out. I pronounce thee "Silver".

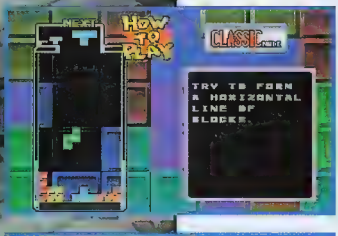
Ben

THE BOTTOM LINE_

Ben's Breakdown: As far as fighting games go, Tobal No. 1 is decent. As far as games go, Tobal No. 1 is very fun stuff. The Quest Mode sets Tobal No. 1 apart from its competitors and was the only thing that kept me playing hour after hour. I definitely recommend checking it out. I pronounce thee "Silver".

TETRIS PLUS

PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY JALECO

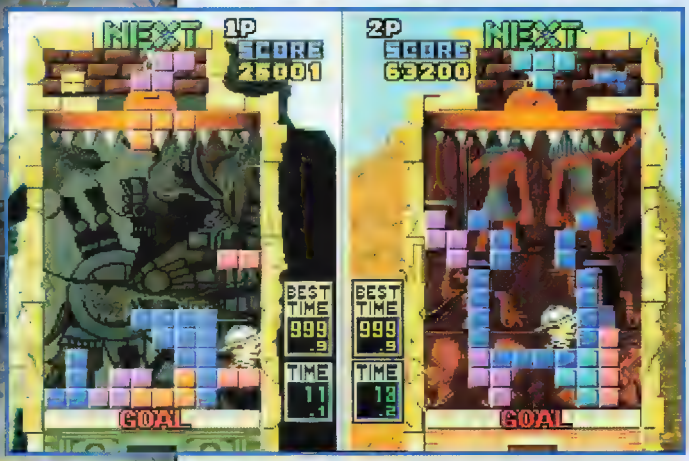


Aw, man, when you mess with perfection, you're just ASKING for trouble. And make no mistake, Tetris is perfection — one of the simplest and most addictive video games ever made. Not even Tetris' legendary designer, Alexey Pajitnov, has been able to improve upon his creation (although he's certainly tried, putting out a never-ending series of weak computer-game "sequels" that've just about destroyed the goodwill he built up with Tetris). So what has Jaleco done with Tetris Plus (which sounds like the name of a new-and-improved Russian laundry detergent)? They've added two scoops of cutesiness and a gameplay twist that's a tad more annoying than amusing.

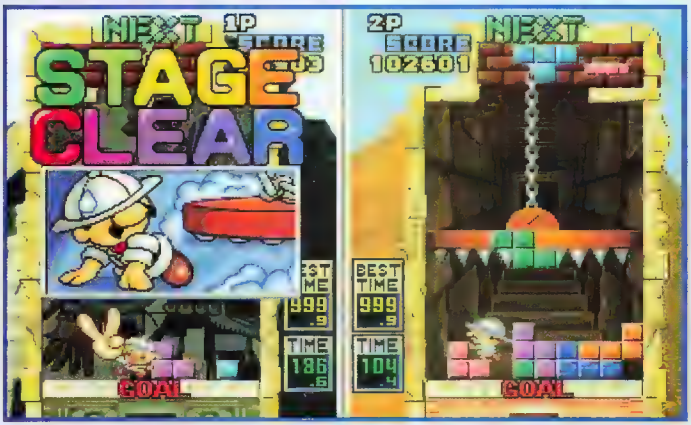
Tetris Plus — which has the look and feel of a coin-op, although I never saw it in any of Maui's three arcades (one of the 101 advantages of moving to California: an arcade on every corner), has four modes of play. First is the Classic mode, which gives you a pure and unadulterated game of Tetris, without the goofy gameplay twist — would you be surprised to find out it's the most fun?

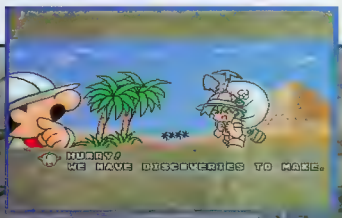
The highlight of Tetris Plus is the

Puzzle mode, in which a grizzled old (yet strangely cute) archaeologist and his perky assistant explore ancient ruins around the world — ruins that happen to be filled with Tetris blocks. While the archaeologist marches back and forth on the screen, you try to break enough blocks so that he falls to the bottom. Your task is made doubly tricky by the slowly descending wall of spikes and the increasingly complicated patterns of blocks. The dumb-as-rocks explorer doesn't help his own cause — he climbs up blocks when they fall too close, putting himself closer to those sharp and nasty spikes. Winning in the Puzzle mode requires more than pure Tetris block-busting skills — it also forces you to learn the old man's reactions and keep him from



EXCITED





a painful squishing. This is definitely more complicated than plain ol' Tetris, but is it more fun? Nuh-uh.

The Vs. mode is a two-played version of Puzzle, with players sending blocks back and forth to try and kill the other guy's explorer. (Big meanies!)

The most unusual feature is the Edit mode, which allows players to create and play up to ten levels of their own, saving them to a memory card and sharing them with buddies. But why would you do this when the later levels in the Puzzle mode are more challenging than anything an average Joe (or Zach) could create? You wouldn't, of course.

Tetris Plus' other big problem, aside from messing with Tetris in the first place, are its sluggish controls. Tetris is a game where precise controls are absolutely crucial, and Tetris Plus just doesn't have a precise feel.

Maybe I'm spoiled from the ball-busting antics of Bust-A-Move 2, but Tetris Plus left me colder than a plucked chicken at the North Pole. The one- and two-player modes are tedious, and the puzzle-editing mode is pretty much useless. If you're really in need of a Tetris-ish gaming experience, buy the obscure PlayStation game Geom Cube, a 3-D version of Tetris that's a darn fun two-player game.

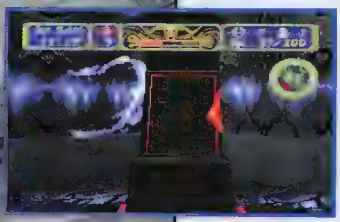
Zach

THE BOTTOM LINE

Maybe I'm spoiled from the ball-busting antics of Bust-A-Move 2, but Tetris Plus left me colder than a plucked chicken at the North Pole. The one- and two-player modes are tedious, and the puzzle-editing mode is pretty much useless. If you're really in need of a Tetris-ish gaming experience, buy the obscure PlayStation game Geom Cube, a 3-D version of Tetris that's a darn fun two-player game.

TECMO'S DECEPTION

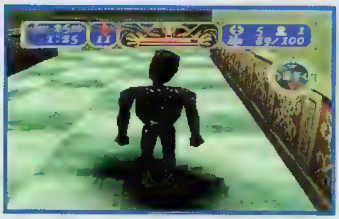
PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY TECMO



How in the hell does a company whose best-known games are from the 8-bit NES era (Tecmo Bowl, Ninja Gaiden) come out of nowhere to produce one of the most original strategy games of the 32-bit era? I don't know and I don't care; I only know that Deception has rocked my world from the moment I started playing it.

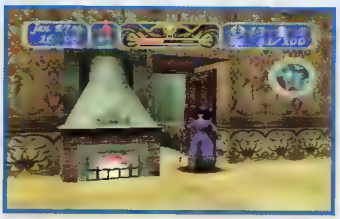
As the game opens, your father, the king, is brutally slain — and you're framed by your scheming weasel of a brother. As you're about to be executed, you pray for someone — anyone — to save you from your rather sucky fate. "Anyone" turns out to be the Angel of Death, who whisks you away to the Castle of the Damned. Your goal? To become the Master of the Castle and engineer the resurrection of none other than Satan himself. (Fun for the whole family!)

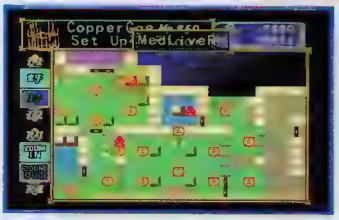
When you first arrive in the Castle, you're just a lowly wanker with no powers and precious little strength. But by killing the current Master, you gain the title (which carries the additional benefits of free cookie-dough ice cream and



unlimited footrubs) and can start exploring your new digs.

Because the Castle is a Price Costco of evil, with magical powers in bulk quantities, it attracts a goodly number of invaders. Some are good guys looking to snuff you out. Some are bad guys looking to steal your powers. Some are just poor saps who took the wrong exit off the 405. All of these folks must be killed. To do that, you construct traps in the Castle and lure the explorers into them. While they struggle to break free, you pummel them to death (ouch). You can then "convert" their bodies into magic power or stuff them into coffins for later use. Later use? Yes, indeed, you sick puppy. You can use the flesh of dead bod-





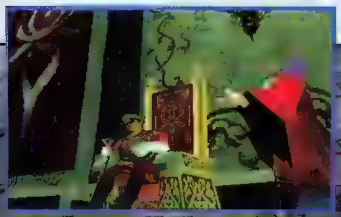
add new rooms to the Castle as you progress through the game.

I love Deception because its gameplay is such a slick blend of strategy and role-playing. The strategy section gives you plenty of freedom and creativity (although the game is semi-linear, breaking up the game into "chapters"), and the first-person RPG section is fast and furious (while still having better graphics than the comparable 3D games). I also gotta admit that there's something disturbingly appealing about playing a video game in which you're not a good guy, but an evil bastid.

And even though the monster-making and room-building means plenty of playability, the game's six different endings means you'll be playing over and over to see them all.

Deception is a wonderful game — it's damn original, it's challenging, and it's gorgeous. I haven't had such an easy decision handing out a Gold X to a game since the beloved Bust-A-Move 2. Buy this game and bask in the glow of originality!

Zach



ies and piece together monsters to roam the Castle halls: werewolves, zombies, and other unattractive monstrosities. Your powers also extend into the realm of home improvement, as you can create new traps and

THE BOTTOM LINE

92%

And even though the monster-making and room-building means plenty of playability, the game's six different endings means you'll be playing over and over to see them all. Deception is a wonderful game — it's damn original, it's challenging, and it's gorgeous. I haven't had such an easy decision handing out a Gold X to a game since the beloved Bust-A-Move 2. Buy this game and bask in the glow of originality!

KING OF FIGHTERS '95

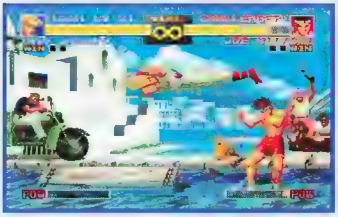
PUBLISHED BY SONY - DEVELOPED BY SNK

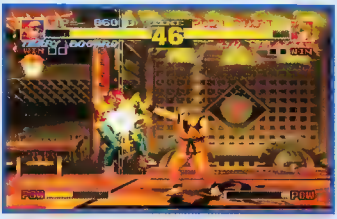
King of Fighters '95 is an arcade translation of SNK's arcade hit of the same name. Now, I have been playing SNK fighting games since the original Fatal Fury made its appearance in the arcade and I must say they were quite entertaining. I have, however, stayed away from purchasing them for my home consoles, and here are a few reasons why you should too.

To an outsider, KOF95 presents itself as a decent piece of software — the average 2D fighting game with tons of moves and characters. It also comes with numerous gameplay modes such as: Single Play; Team Play; Single VS; and Team VS. Heck, the game even comes with a demo mode, where you can watch the computer play against itself, and a "how to play" mode, where you can learn the basics. During gameplay you even have the option to sidestep, taunt and charge up your super-meter for use with super special moves. Sounds good huh? Le'me tell you something: you have been bamboozled, deceived and led-astray (as Greg-X would say). As soon as I got about 30 seconds into my first game on

the PSX version of KOF95, I got that empty feeling in my stomach; you know, the one you get when you have two "big spins" on a lottery ticket, then scratch off the final space and see "$2.00".

So you wanna know what's so bad about the KOF95? First of all, combos are almost non-existent. The ability to link basic moves into special moves (ie. SFA2) is hardly anywhere to be found — a huge minus in a 2D fighting game of this day and age. Secondly, the sound is terrible. Sure there are a few decent background music tracks, but the sound effects for character moves are extremely bad. Basically, the sound effects seem like they were being played through an old bus-station microphone, before they





of "kia". Multiply that by forty or fifty times (a round) and you have an up-to-date Chinese water tourture, complete with 24 characters and SNK logo.

The only high point of KOF95 is the background animation. I actually enjoyed seeing the characters taunt each other, then jump into a shallow puddle to settle their differences. Another amusing stage starts off with a huge lightning blast to a big oak tree, then you and your opponent fight in front of the oak, as it burns in the background. The only problem here is the excessive load time, which often has you waiting in excess of 20 seconds between matches.

Ben's Breakdown: You can pretty much sum up KOF95 by comparing it to one of those low-priced car conversions where they put a Ferrari body on a Fiero chassi. It looks great on the outside, but the handling is not what you expected. If you have been searching for the ultimate arcade/console fighting game conversion, check the review of Street Fighter Alpha 2 in last month's issue. I declare thee "Tin"

Ben

were recorded to disc. Another strike against KOF95 is the super-annoying use of each character's grunt. Each time a character punches, kicks, or an attack button is pressed in any way, they scream out some form

THE BOTTOM LINE

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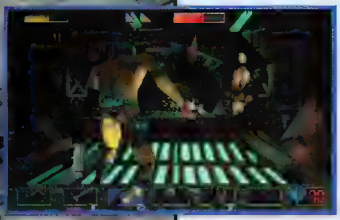
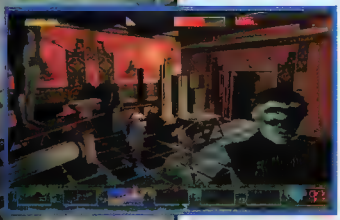
TIME COMMANDO

PUBLISHED BY ACTIVISION - DEVELOPED BY ADELINE





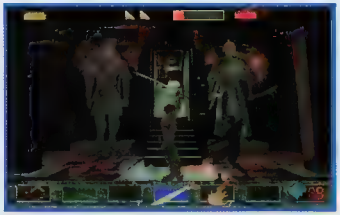
My editor and good bud, Greg Off, experienced one of video gaming's strangest phenomenons when he played through Time Commando: if you play any game long enough, you end up loving it. I had much the same thing happen to me when I was stuck staying at my grandparents' house for a week; the only thing that kept me sane (other than sleeping until 2 PM every day) was my Atari Lynx and my copy of Todd's Adventures in Slime World, a mediocre game that I will adore 'til the day I croak. Not that Time Commando is a bad game, mind you, but a good one that progressively gets better.

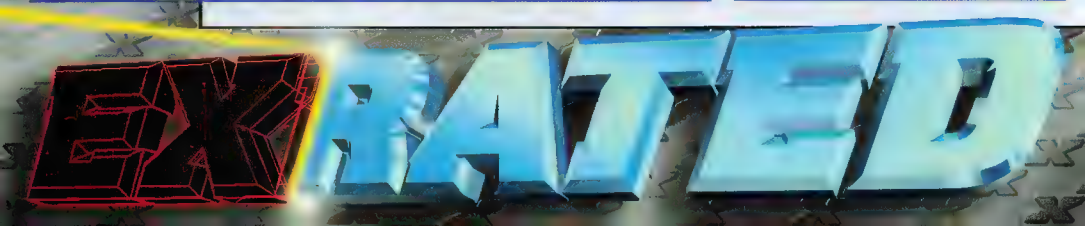
The storyline (which doesn't even bother trying to explain the massive paradoxes of time travel, since only Stephen Hawking could understand them anyway) casts you as a member of a military organization that uses a time-travel machine to simulate combat in any era of mankind. (How jumping back to 1,000,000 B.C. and watching Cro-Magnons pummel each other with clubs could help the strategic knowledge of a laser-equipped 21st-century military is also not explained.) A saboteur manages to sneak a computer virus into the system and it's your job to purge the virus before the time vortex gets out of hand and destroys the space-time

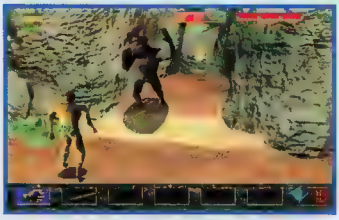
continuum as we know it. (Man, do I sound like a bad episode of Star Trek: The Next Generation or what?)

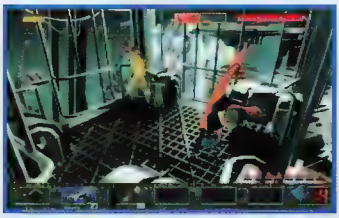
Fortunately for the sake of gameplay, erasing the virus doesn't require hours of boring programming, but instead forces you to jump through eight eras of history — starting in the prehistoric age and going through the Roman Empire, ancient Japan, the Middle Ages and the Old West, among others — collecting healthy computer chips conveniently scattered on the ground, while battling the none-too-friendly residents of each era.

The graphic presentation is what makes Time Commando unique. The background of each level is pre-rendered, full-motion video that "plays" as you walk through the level; the foreground characters are 3D polygon-rendered









beings, a la Tekken, although not as detailed or fluidly animated.

The vast majority of the game has you fighting enemies with your bare hands and with weapons you find in each era. (There are five weapons in every era except the prehistoric age, which has but four, one of them being a "mega-club.") The selection of moves is muy limited: a lunge move, a defensive posture and a thrust. The control response can be a tad sluggish; no Street Fighter-like combos here. And if you still think the combat is too easy, you can jack up the difficulty level to add more enemies and make them stronger. (My guess is that most players will be more than challenged at the normal level.)

There's no real puzzle-solving, although the combat isn't mindless; you need to learn which weapons to use against each type of enemy, and you need to meticulously search each level for "hidden" items placed in the nooks and crannies of the background. (There's always some kind of visual or audio clue when a hidden item is near — a kind gesture by the designers.)

So there ya go! Time Commando has lots of graphically varied combat and a bit of exploration and experimentation. It's extremely linear, because of the pre-rendered backgrounds, and can be occasionally frustrating because of the sluggish controls. But, it's good fun and gets more and more enjoyable as you play deeper into it.

Zach

THE BOTTOM LINE

85%

So there ya go! Time Commando has lots of graphically varied combat and a bit of exploration and experimentation. It's extremely linear, because of the pre-rendered backgrounds, and can be occasionally frustrating because of the sluggish controls. But, it's good fun and gets more and more enjoyable as you play deeper into it.

BURNING ROAD

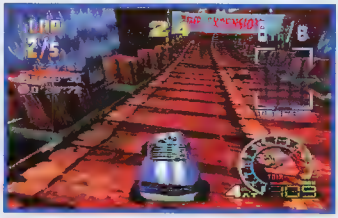
PUBLISHED BY PLAYMATES – DEVELOPED BY TOKA

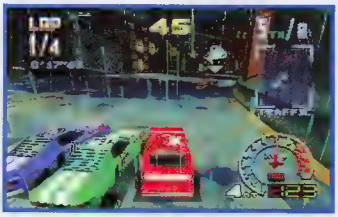
There is (or shouldn't be) no doubt that the PlayStation is the place to be for driving games, all deference aside to Sega Rally. The fourth quarter alone will see the release of over five 2nd generation racing titles, including, but not limited to, Psygnosis' F1, EA's Andretti Racing and Namco's Ridge Racer Revolution. It's going to be a great Christmas! Joining the fray is Playmates' "Burning Road". Previewed in our September issue and slated for a December release, this title has been long anticipated since our first look back at E3 in June.

Not your typical racing game, Burning Road is more of a "survival of the fittest" type affair. In Burning Road, your main objective is to beat the clock; if you don't finish the race in the allotted time, regardless of your position, you can't progress to the next course. You have your choice of four different cars to race, none of which are exactly "stock." Each car has its own unique characteristics, for speed and acceleration, designed to help you get through the race. The most unique vehicle is the monster truck, which has a top speed of 160mph and has the best handling of the bunch. The other three cars look like something out of a vin-

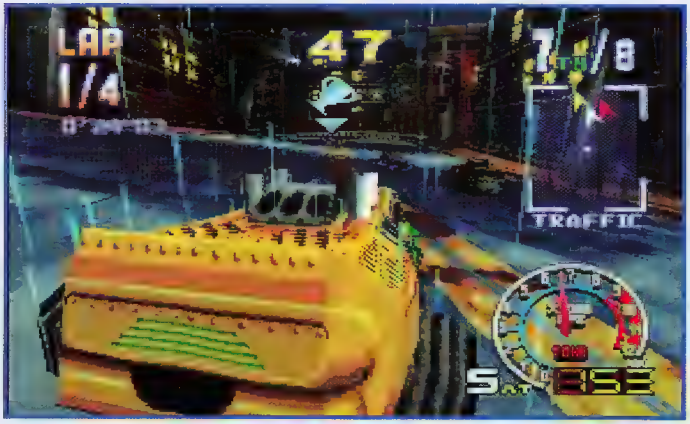
tage Hot Wheels collection. Your choice of vehicle becomes critical as you progress through the three different courses. The first course is your basic day time driving with some minor terrain challenges. The second course is truly amazing; the speed of the game is showcased here. The course winds its way through snow, ice, water and dirt, with enough airborne opportunities to have you thinking you're a paratrooper; definitely the most entertaining of the three. The third course is nighttime city driving through rain and blinding lightning. If you finish all three tracks in the allotted time, you will get the opportunity to continue, racing the three courses backwards.

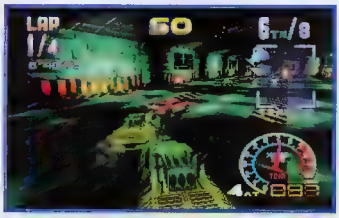
The look of the game is unmistakably Daytona like; you have a radar screen for





EXPATED





traffic and a trophy cup designating the leader. Each course ads some unique visuals as well. From huge windmills to hovering helicopters, if you look at these instead of the road , you'll be eating more of it than burning it. Additionally, the courses are littered with garbage cans and road hazards that you need to avoid to keep your speed up. Running into one of these garbage cans at 160 miles per hour, will automatically slow you down by half that. The key to beating the clock in every course, is mastering the power slide and keeping away from the road hazards. It doesn't matter which vehicle you choose, the handling isn't good enough to stay on the course at full speed; you need to slide into the corners at specific angles to keep your speed. Well, enough said about the particulars.

With so many quality racing games on the market, its difficult to choose a clear leader. With Burning Road, however, it certainly has the edge on the "fun" factor. Simply put, it may not be the biggest or the most challenging racing game (a few more courses and a two player mode would help), but it is certainly one of the most entertaining. The sound track is just what you need to keep your adrenaline up and the speed is phenomenal. I've never laughed so hard while playing a video game. Crushing your opponent into a snow bank at 160 mph is immensely therapeutic. Buy the game, you won't be disappointed.

Alex

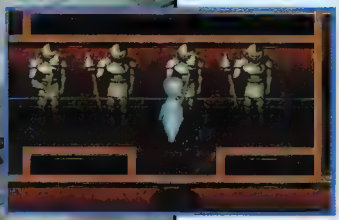
THE BOTTOM LINE

88%

The sound track is just what you need to keep your adrenaline up, and the speed is phenomenal. I've never laughed so hard while playing a video game. Crushing your opponent into a snow bank at 160 mph is immensely therapeutic. Buy the game, you won't be disappointed.

CASPER

PUBLISHED BY INTERPLAY - DEVELOPED BY FUNCOM



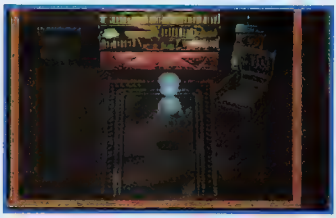
Releasing this game well over a year after the movie, based on the comic book, seems like closing the barn door after the horses have bolted, but I digress. After bouncing around in development for two years, I wasn't expecting much from Casper, and that's exactly what I got: not much. I guess that with such a "big" license, Interplay couldn't just put this mongrel to sleep — they had to put it out there to please the powers that be at Universal, Harvey Comics, and whoever else has a hunk of the Casper franchise in their financial portfolios.

The game itself is an action/adventure game that's short on action AND adventure. You control the Friendly Ghost himself as he floats through the halls of Whipstaff Manor, completing various tasks and solving puzzles by collecting items and using them at the proper locations. For example, you can't open certain doors without certain keys. You also collect food to boost your energy meter, which is depleted by miscellaneous dangers. Casper also has to deal with three big bully ghosts (the names

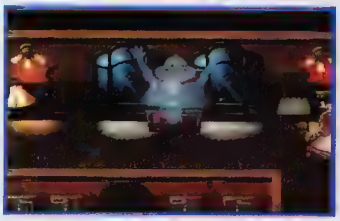
of whom slip my mind at the moment) who constantly pester and/or injure him.

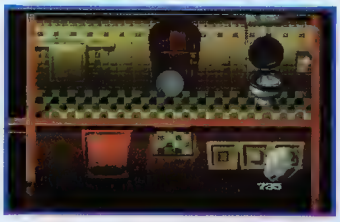
So what's so bad 'bout Casper? The SLOW gameplay, for starters; there's no speed-boost button to make Casper haul supernatural butt, and as you get more familiar with the Manor's layout, you'll really be wishing for one. The step-'n-fetch-it nature of the gameplay is also a drag, although it's probably needed for the young'uns who'll be playing this game and would just be confused by nonlinear gameplay.

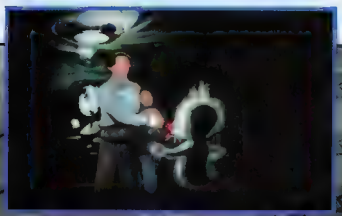
What annoys me most is that much of the gameplay doesn't make any damn sense. How is a ghost harmed by fire (which Casper is)? Why does a ghost



EXRATED







need keys to get through doors (which Casper does)? How is a ghost harmed at ALL, since he's already dead? I guess that the kids, at whom this game is most definitely aimed, won't mind the lack of logic, but it sure bugged me, because it shows how little thought went into the design. It reeks of one of those terrible licensed movie tie-in games that were all the same damn Final Fight rip-off.

The graphics are very weak for a PlayStation game; I'm thinking that they were ported over from the 3DO version from which Casper started out (Now you understand the two-year development time), almost unchanged. The rooms at Whipstaff Manor are static and still, except for the occasional rocking pendulum or crackling fireplace. The music and sound are much better, especially the orchestral (but too short and therefore quickly repetitious) soundtracks.

Casper is very much a game for children — no one with an age in the double digits will want to play it — but even kids won't be thrilled with the slow-paced gameplay and boring tasks the game throws at them. Not a terrible game, but definitely not worth anything but a rental.

Zach

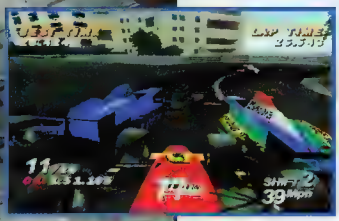
THE BOTTOM LINE

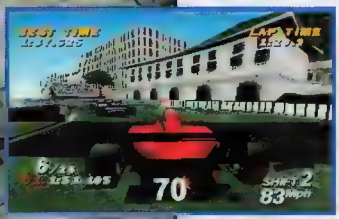
65%

Casper is very much a game for children — no one with an age in the double digits will want to play it — but even kids won't be thrilled with the slow-paced gameplay and boring tasks the game throws at them. Not a terrible game, but definitely not worth anything but a rental.

FORMULA 1

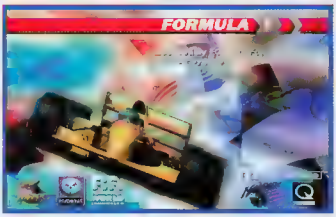
PUBLISHED AND DEVELOPED BY PSYGNOSIS





Designed from the outset to be a true F1 simulation, everything you would expect has been stuffed into this game, including an F1A license, with all 17 of the courses, 13 teams and 35 actual drivers of the 1995 F1 season. To begin with, you have your choice of two different driving styles: the arcade mode or the Gran Prix. The arcade mode is an all out speed fest, with default steering and brake assist. This really helps, as the car anticipates gear changes as you plunge into the curves. Not for the sim freak, the arcade mode is for those of us who want to step on the gas and never let up. The goal is simple: beat the clock in all seventeen races, finish in the top three in all seventeen, and you will experience the winners rostrum.

Gran Prix mode is for the serious driver. In this mode you will participate in the entire F1 experience, from outfitting your car to participating in two hour races (specifically designed for those of us who have no life). Obviously, the GP mode is for fans of a true racing simulation; there are no arcade elements, whatsoever, in the Gran Prix mode. Within the Gran Prix mode, you have two choices before getting started. If you just want to start racing, the "Race" option thrusts you



right into the middle of the action. However, if you want a little more realism, you can choose your set up options which include pit-stop strategies, weather and damage options, and practice and qualifying rounds. Well, the packaging is all there; it's time to see what's under the hood.

The first thing you notice, when you boot up F1, is the look of the game. F1 looks and sounds like no other driving game currently available. The vehicles are flawlessly drawn and the courses are exact duplications of some of the most famous race tracks in the world. Developed in true 3D, expect your jaw to hit the floor when you race Monaco for the first time. The driving experience is physically accurate as well. Believe it or not, when you accelerate on grass, your car will actually spin out

EXRATED

ing the car behave the way it's designed to. The sensation of speed is what you would expect of a second generation PlayStation title. What makes F1 a little different, however, is that you can actually drive the cars in the cockpit view. My biggest complaint with some of the other racing sims out there, is that you loose the speed when you are forced to use a behind the car view, because the cockpit view is undriveable. What's the point of playing a racing game, if you can't go fast?

It's obvious that Psygnosis has put together the best racing sim yet, for the PlayStation; my one complaint would be the lack of detail in the backgrounds. But what makes it really stand out above the rest of the crowd, is the attention to detail found throughout the game. Most commentary in racing games is annoying at best. In F1 the running commentary (by Britain's own Murray Walker) is something you actually look forward to; it's almost as if it anticipates your every move. The soundtrack is pure adrenaline, and the crowds will reward you for a job well done. F1 is one of those rare racing titles that will sell hardware. Namco did it with Ridge Racer, and now it's Psygnosis' turn with F1.

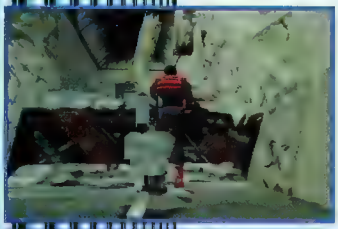
Alex

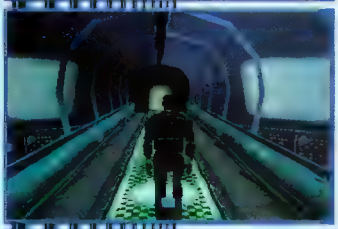
and, as you pick up damage, the car will experience reduced capacities. The steering mechanics are the closest to a true rack and pinion feeling yet found on a video game. It takes a little getting used to, but the tight feel is much more conducive to mak-

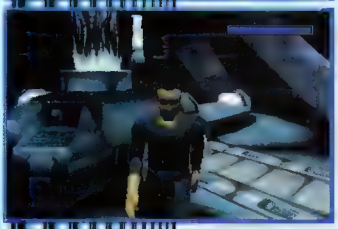
THE BOTTOM LINE

95%

It's obvious that Psygnosis has put together the best racing sim yet, for the PlayStation; my one complaint would be the lack of detail in the backgrounds. But what makes it really stand out above the rest of the crowd, is the attention to detail found throughout the game. F1 is one of those rare racing titles that will sell hardware. Namco did it with Ridge Racer, and now it's Psygnosis' turn with F1.



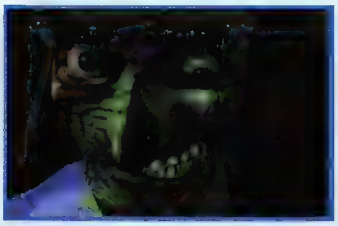


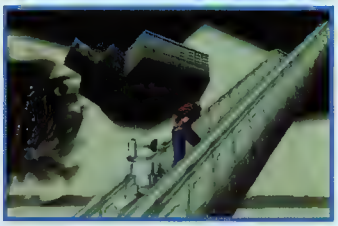


OVER BLOOD

RIVERHILLSOFT • AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN

Riverhillsoft's Over Blood is a damn-fine game, combining a Resident Evil type atmosphere with a real 3D engine. One or two of you might remember an obscure import 3DO game titled Dr. Hauser, which was also created by the same company, and it seems they've come quite a ways since then. There's an assortment of dead, decaying bodies and nasty-looking creatures, as well as plenty of items to acquire and puzzles to figure out. You can switch from a first-person view, to a third-person, behind your character, view to the traditional "varying camera angle" view -- all on the fly. This is one title worth the extra dough. Very cool.

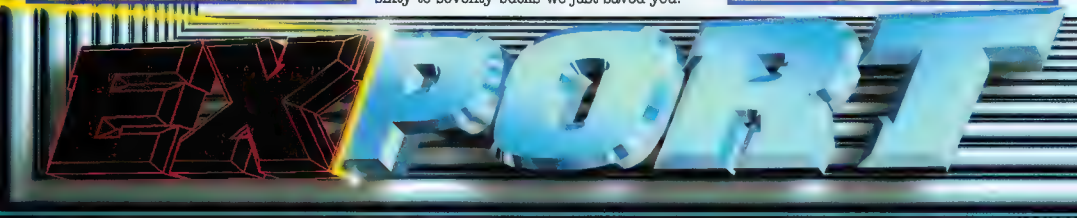




HYPER RALLY

HARVEST ONE • AVAILABLE NOW JAPAN

Harvest One has put together their poor man's version of Sega Rally, titled, coincidentally enough, Hyper Rally, and oh what a poor, pitiful excuse for a game this is. In comparison, this title makes Choro-Q look like it's running off three SGI Workstations. In any event, Hyper Rally is a racing "tour de force", taking you from the parched, cracked earth of the African jungle to the slick, ice-covered roads of the Swiss Alps -- in an all-out event to finish first. And, if the graphics don't scare you off, the gameplay should, as your car is pretty much uncontrollable from the get-go and jerks around the screen at even a mere tapping of the controller. If you take even one word of advice from our magazine, and you're into purchasing import titles, do yourself a HUGE favor and NOT buy this game. That's a good sixty to seventy bucks we just saved you.



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The PS*Extreme* Historical Ranking Chart

EXCAVATE is the section where we dig up the last six months of our old ratings and present them on one easy-to-read page, along with a little explanation/breakdown of our rating system. Use this as your buying guide throughout the year and as a reference for those older games that you might have missed (or wish you had).

GOLD GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
NCAA GameBreaker	October 1996	98%
Tekken 2	September 1996	98%
Crash Bandicoot	September 1996	98%
Motor Toon Grand Prix	October 1996	95%
Fade to Black	July 1996	94%
Star Gladiator	October 1996	93%
Die Hard Trilogy	September 1996	93%
Jumping Flash 2	August 1996	93%
Ridge Racer Revolution	September 1996	92%
NBA Shootout	May 1996	92%
Triple Play 97	July 1996	92%
NHL Powerplay 96	July 1996	92%
Namco Museum Vol. 1	August 1996	92%
Street Fighter Alpha 2	October 1996	91%
Worms	September 1996	91%
Slam 'N Jam '96	May 1996	91%
International Track & Field	July 1996	91%
Magic Carpet	May 1996	90%
Bust-A-Move 2	August 1996	90%

SILVER GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Andretti Racing	October 1996	89%
V Tennis	August 1996	89%
Top Gun	July 1996	88%
Wipeout XL	October 1996	88%
Final Doom	October 1996	87%
Bottom of the 9th	May 1996	87%
Hardball 5	May 1996	87%
Adidas Power Soccer	August 1996	87%
Tokyo Highway Battle	September 1996	86%
Skeleton Warriors	July 1996	86%
Project Overkill	September 1996	85%
Spot Goes to Hollywood	October 1996	84%
NBA Live 96	May 1996	84%
Battle Arena Toshinden 2	July 1996	84%
Williams Arcade Classics	May 1996	83%
Legacy of Kain	October 1996	82%
Robo Pit	June 1996	81%
Wing Commander III	June 1996	80%
Buster Brothers Collection	May 1996	80%

BRONZE GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Floating Runner	July 1996	79%
Bogey: Dead Six	August 1996	79%
Impact Racing	October 1996	78%
Gunship	September 1996	78%
Blazing Dragons	June 1996	78%
Madden 97	October 1996	77%
Project: Horned Owl	August 1996	76%
D	May 1996	75%
Olympic Soccer	August 1996	75%
Shell Shock	June 1996	74%
Striker 96	May 1996	74%
Beyond the Beyond	September 1996	73%
College Slam	May 1996	73%
The Hive	May 1996	73%
Grid Runner	October 1996	71%
Space Hulk	August 1996	70%
Tecmo World Golf	August 1996	70%
Final Round Golf	July 1996	70%

TIN GAMES	ISSUE	RATING
Big Hurt Baseball	August 1996	69%
Olympic Summer Games	September 1996	68%
Sim City 2000	September 1996	58%

WHAT DO ALL THOSE NUMBERS MEAN?

90-99%
"Must buy" games; only the best of the best get Gold. We stand behind these games.

80-89%
Great games, but lacking in some area; usually, for fans of that style of game.

70-79%
Mediocre titles that suffer from some serious flaws. Rent — don't buy.

0-69%
Tin games are to be avoided at all costs. Only die-hard gamers would buy these.

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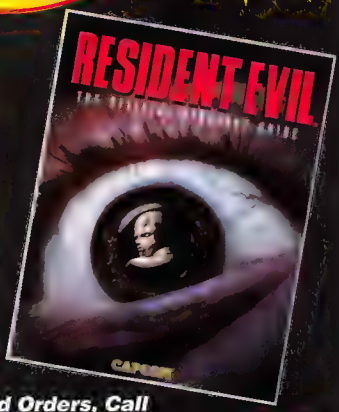

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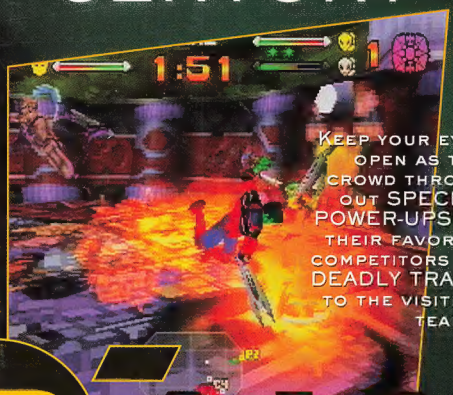

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